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 جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الرأي"

RIYADH (AP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived Saturday for a one-day visit to discuss regional problems with Saudi King Fahd and other high-ranking officials. The talks will focus on the Middle East peace process and the recent military tensions between Turkey and Syria over Turkish allegations that Syria is harbouring Turkish Kurdish rebels, diplomats said. The two leaders also will discuss the U.N. air embargo on Libya, said the diplomats on condition of anonymity. The embargo is aimed at forcing Libya to hand over for trial two suspects wanted for the 1988 bombing of an American jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland. This is the first time that Fahd, who is in his mid-70s, is meeting with a foreign leader since undergoing surgery Aug. 12 to have his gallbladder removed. Fahd's half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, handled the kingdom's day-to-day affairs during the king's hospitalisation.

ing their late-night meeting on Friday, Palestinian min-

eration or storage of the vials
the possibility that the serum
expired.

'Rebels kill six in Algeria'

ALGIERS (R) — Islamists slashed the throats of six people in new attacks on two Algerian villages, local dailies said on Saturday.

Guerrillas stormed a farming community near Khemis Miliana town, 90 kilometres southwest of Algiers, on Thursday, and cut the throats of three peasants, said the French-language Le Matin daily.

The newspaper said rebels carried out several similar raids in the past week throughout Ain Delfa province where Khemis

Miliana is located to "sow terror" among the local population.

Le Matin, which gave no more details on the raids, did not say how many people were killed in these reported attacks. There was no immediate comment available from independent or official sources on the report.

Three civilians were killed also on Thursday by having their throats slashed in another rebel attack in Mila area, 300 kilometres east of the Algerian capital, said Al

Khabar daily.

It said the three victims were members of one family. The rebel assailants broke into their home and cut their throats before they fled into woods nearby, Al Khabar said.

Thousands of civilians have been killed in massacres in the past 18 months, mostly in rich farm lands around Algiers and in western Algeria.

The government blamed Islamist guerrillas for the carnage.

In another incident, troops

shot dead two Islamist gunmen and captured two others on Thursday when they stormed a rebel hideout in Al Harrouch village in the coastal eastern Skikda province, 340 kilometres from Algiers, said Al Watan.

More than 65,000 people have died in Algeria since 1992 when the North African country plunged into violence following the cancellation of a general election in which radical Islamists had taken a commanding lead, according to Western estimates.

Exiled opposition reports Bahrain new arrests

LONDON (R) — An exiled Bahraini opposition group said on Saturday that police had used tear gas and beaten people at a mass gathering to commemorate the death of a Bahraini Shiite Muslim.

The London-based Bahrain Freedom Movement also said in a statement that police had arrested several young people in various parts of the Gulf Arab island.

"Tear gas and rubber bullets were used on the crowds of people who have taken part in the commemoration... of the death of Mohammad Al Sayah" in Bahrain's small island of Sitra, the statement said.

It said Sayah, 28, died in hospital of cancer which he had developed in detention. The statement did not give the dates of Sayah's death and the memorial gathering.

Police had also raided the house of Yousef Ahmad Yousef, a teacher, and subjected his 19-year-old son Ahmad to "a brutal beating in front of his family," the statement said.

It said 12 Shiites, most of them under 20, had been arrested last month. Another Shiite, 18-year-old Zuhair Nooh, was arrested on Friday. It gave no reasons for the arrests.

Members of the island's majority Shiite community have launched sporadic protests, bombings and arson attacks since December 1994 to demand political and economic reforms by the Sunni-led government. The campaign has abated recently.

Nicosia has no comment on reports it shelved missiles

NICOSIA (AFP) — The Cyprus government refused to comment Saturday on Turkish-Cypriot claims that it had indefinitely postponed deployment of controversial ground-to-air missiles in the south of the divided island.

"We have decided to make no comment on this issue," said government spokesman Christos Stylianides.

Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash said in New York Friday that the island's internationally-recognised Greek-Cypriot government had decided to shelve delivery of the advanced S-300 missiles.

"Everybody that I have contacted believed that the missiles will not come," he told a news conference at the United Nations.

"No matter what declarations [Cypriot President Glafcos] Clerides makes, it appears that he has assured everybody that the missiles will not come, so we'll wait and see."

The Cyprus government ordered the missiles from Russia early last year but Ankara has repeatedly threatened to destroy them if they are deployed, saying they would threaten Turkish Cypriots in the north of the island as well as Turkey itself.

Clerides told the U.N. General Assembly last month that Cyprus would not renounce its "sovereign right to strengthen its defence with what it considers necessary for as long as Turkish occupation forces remain in Cyprus."

The eastern Mediterranean island has been divided since Ankara invaded its northern third in 1974 following a Greek-Cypriot coup in Nicosia aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

Turkish Cypriots declared their own state in the north in 1983 but it is recognised only by Ankara, which stations 35,000 troops there.

Iranian parliamentary speaker to visit Italy, Spain

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri is expected in Italy on Sunday on the first leg of an eight-day trip that will also take him to Spain, the official news agency IRNA said.

Nateq-Nouri, a leader of the conservative faction in the Islamic republic, will hold meetings in Rome with Italian President Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Romano Prodi, IRNA said.

He will then go to Spain, where he will meet King Juan Carlos, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Spanish deputies, IRNA added.

Nateq-Nouri will be accompanied by a delegation of MPs and Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi, who looks after European affairs.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini confirmed on Thursday that both Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi will visit Italy in the coming months.

Kharazi will visit "this autumn" and Khatami "a few months after," Dini said on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York after a meeting with his Iranian counterpart.

Dini visited Tehran in

March, and Prodi was there in June on an official visit.

Italian Foreign Trade Minister Augusto Fantozzi is expected to visit Iran on Oct. 6 at the head of a trade mission. Iran and Spain traditionally have good relations and the Iranian foreign minister visited Madrid in June.

The Islamic republic named Hassan Shafti, formerly managing director at Iran Air, its new ambassador to Spain last month.

Iran Air resumed its weekly flight from Tehran to Madrid in July after an eight-year break due to economic reasons.

Egypt court starts retrial of nurse

ALEXANDRIA (R) — An Egyptian court on Saturday reopened the charges against a nurse who was sentenced to death for killing a patient but whose case is being retried, court sources said.

They said the court in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria charged Aida Nouredin Mohammad Abu Zeid with accidentally

killing the patient by unwittingly giving him a lethal injection.

It also dropped previous charges that she had tried to kill 29 others to take revenge on a doctor who did not return her affections and who was treating those patients.

The sources said the next hearing would take place on

Nov. 1 and that the new charges carry a maximum penalty of seven years in jail.

Abu Zeid, in her mid-20s, was sentenced to death in March after she was convicted of actual and attempted murder, stealing drugs and forging hospital documents to cover the



VISITORS MARK 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF 1973 WAR: Arab visitors Saturday visit a former Israeli trench in the Sinai peninsula during commemorations marking the 25th anniversary of the October 1973 war (AFP photo)

U.N. announces new indirect Cyprus talks to break deadlock

NICOSIA (AP) — The top U.N. official in Cyprus announced Saturday that she will embark on a series of separate meetings with the leaders of the war-divided island to try to break the deadlock in direct reunification talks.

The announcement follows reports that Cyprus has agreed to delay again the controversial deployment of Russian-made missiles.

Dame Ann Hercus, the resident representative of the U.N. secretary general, said that U.N. resolutions reject the partition of

the island as the basis for a settlement.

"Nevertheless it has to be the role of the impartial mediator to explore ideas and options," she said.

Otherwise, "the parties will continue confronting each other with their well-entrenched positions," she told a news conference.

The talks have been deadlocked since August last year following demands by Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash for the recognition of his breakaway state in the island's Turkish-occupied north.

His state is only recognised by Turkey, which invaded Cyprus in 1974 following an abortive coup by supporters of union with Greece.

Hercus said Denkash and Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, agreed to have separate "confidential discussions" with her. The aim is "to explore how best a process might evolve or develop and what subjects might be discussed" in preparation for a resumption of the direct talks, she added.

The new U.N. effort comes amid tension over

Clerides' plan for the deployment of Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missiles.

Turkey has warned it will prevent their deployment, Greece, in turn, said it would come to the aid of Cyprus if it is attacked.

Diplomatic sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Clerides has agreed to a further postponement of the arrival of the missiles, originally planned for July then November.

The Cyprus government routinely refuses to comment on the date of the missiles' deployment.

End of Paris in Beirut marks the coming of Assad

BEIRUT (AFP) — In a move that at least one city councilman said was not symbolic of weakening ties with France, Beirut announced Saturday it is renaming a major section of its famed seafont esplanade, the Avenue de Paris, after Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Acting Municipal Affairs Minister Bassem Al Sabeh said that Beirut city council had decided to rename a stretch of the road to "pay homage to the efforts undertaken by President Assad that allowed putting an end to the war in Lebanon, establishing stability and commencing reconstruction."

Bordered by palm trees and curling along the capital's seafont, the esplanade is the most beautiful in the city and a popular spot for a waterfront stroll.

It was dubbed the Avenue de Paris during the French mandate in

Lebanon (1920-1943), but its renaming should not be seen as a disavowal of Lebanon's close ties with France, said a member of the city council who asked not to be named.

Avenue Hafez Assad will still turn into the Avenue Charles de Gaulle further up the road, and the council is also studying the possibility of naming another of the city's streets after French President Jacques Chirac, he said.

Several Lebanese newspapers, notably the Arab nationalist papers Al Kifah, Al Arabi and Al Shira, have launched a campaign in recent weeks to rename streets named for foreigners "hostile to the Arab identity of Lebanon."

Drawing particular ire are Beirut roads named for French figures in World War I, Georges Picot and General Gouraud.

Picot was French high commissioner in Lebanon during the war. In 1916 he negotiated the Sykes-Picot accords under which Britain and France shared out the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

General Gouraud commanded the French army in the Middle East during the war and crushed the fledgling Arab kingdom of Syria in 1920 by defeating the army of King Faisal at Meysaloun on the Lebanese-Syrian border.

After his troops entered Syria, Gouraud proclaimed the creation of a Greater Lebanon by joining the region of Mount Lebanon with neighbouring districts of Syria, a move Syrians strongly opposed.

Syria is currently the most important powerbroker in Lebanon. It maintains some 35,000 troops there and Damascus virtually dictates the selection of the Lebanese president.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — The Pink Panther
15:20 Cartoon — The Pumpkin Patch
15:30 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:00 Discover the World of Animals
16:30 Vid Kids
17:00 The American Chart Show
18:00 Drama — Bonne Esperance
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — Science Magazine (E-M6)
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
20:00 Today's Environment — Secrets of Science
20:30 Drama — Renegade
21:00 Farming and Ecology
22:00 News in English
22:30 Mini-series — Nut Cracker (Pt. 1)
23:59 End of T. X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:10 Fajr
05:27 (Sunrise) Duha
11:24 Dhuhur
14:46 'Asr
17:22 Maghreb
18:39 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624833/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifiah Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at low altitudes particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be relatively warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman.....16/31
Aqaba.....22/35
Deserts.....15/34
Jordan Valley.....21/35

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 31, Aqaba 34 Humidity readings: Amman 32 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.
Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun.....25
Jerash.....33
Um Qays.....31
Madaba.....30
Petra.....32
Dead Sea.....38

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tislog475253
Food Control Centre.....4637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency.....199
Rescue Police 192 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade.....4617101
Blood Bank.....4775121
Highway Police.....5343402
Traffic Police.....4896390
Public Security Dept.....4630321
Hotel Complaints.....5605800
Price Complaints.....5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints.....4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints.....4787111
1
Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121

Dr. Nasser Ibrahim5350432
Dr. Bahjat Bader533264
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi4893542
Firas pharmacy5661912
Al Asema pharmacy4637055
Nairoukh pharmacy4623672
Al Salam pharmacy4636730
Yacoub pharmacy4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637660
Najib pharmacy5347632
IRBD:
Dr. Issam Salih246858
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan3851743
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5858656
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity.....4644281/6
Akhleh Maternity.....4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malbas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5353444
University Hospital5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen4771013
Al-Bashir.....4775110/26
Army, Marka4891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital5602340/50
Amal Hospital5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)909990
IRBD:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone (44) (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:30Jeddah (RJ)
08:45Lamaca (RJ)
09:00Bombay (RJ)
09:05Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:20Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:05Brussels (RJ)
16:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:50London (RJ)
18:10Athens (RJ)
18:20Paris (RJ)
19:40Rome (RJ)

05:30Lamaca (RJ)
05:30Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
08:15Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15Vienna (RJ)
11:15Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:30Rome (RJ)
11:40Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:20Athens (RJ)
12:25London (RJ)
20:40New Delhi (RJ)
20:40Damascus (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:35Bangkok (RJ)
22:45Sanaa (RJ)
23:30Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights
05:30Tel Aviv (LA)
07:55Dubai (EK)
10:30Sanaa, Ta'iz (Y)
10:30Kuwait (KU)
11:30Jeddah (SV)
11:50Moscow (SU)
12:30Abu Dhabi (QF)
14:40Doha (QR)
17:40Beirut (ME)
18:00Paris (AF)
19:00Tel Aviv (LY)
20:00Cairo (MS)
22:20Istanbul (TK)
22:35Lamaca (CY)
00:15Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
01:25Athens, Beirut (OA)
01:40Belgrade (OK)
02:00Rome (AZ)
03:15London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW)
09:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport) (RW)
09:35Tel Aviv (QAIA) (RW)
17:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
22:25Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00Aqaba, Madrid (RJ)

07:45Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Petra news agency to be given financial, administrative independence — Judeh

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Nasser Judeh announced Saturday that the Jordan New Agency, Petra, will be given financial and administrative independence to allow it to operate on a commercial basis.

During a visit to Petra's offices, Judeh said his ministry is planning to introduce a new system for the agency aimed at raising the performance of its staff and enabling it to operate on a commercial basis similar to a scheme adopted by the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation.

Judeh called for coordination between the corporation and Petra so that a single reporter covers events in the governorates instead of separate reporters.

He said the Information Ministry is determined to enforce laws prohibiting its media employees from working for other organisations at the same time.

He noted that among the causes of the poor performance of government employees is that many of them are engaged in other jobs in violation of the law and the Civil Service Commission's regulations.

Judeh urged Petra journalists to focus more attention on issues of concern to the public, their daily lives and their aspirations, adding that more emphasis should be put on issues rather than persons.

He said more attention should be given to the people's issues and concerns in the governorates and not on government officials. He also underlined the need to train Petra journalists to improve their efficiency and performance.

Petra Director Abdullah Eloun briefed the minister on the agency's plans for development and modernisation.



PRINCE MOHAMMAD VISITS MINISTRY: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Saturday speaks with Interior Minister Nayef Qadi following a visit to the ministry. Prince Mohammad was briefed on the recent procedures adopted by the ministry to regulate the Jordanian labour market (Petra photo)

'Egypt to cooperate fully with local labour market organisation'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Hani Riyad on Saturday said the Jordanian government's measures to organise the local labour market will be respected by the Egyptian government.

Speaking after a meeting with Labour Minister Mahdi Farhan to discuss plans to deal with unemployment and replace guest workers with Jordanians, Riyad said Egypt will fully cooperate with the government in implementing a Jordanian-Egyptian agreement on the employment of Egyptian workers.

Farhan told the ambassador that the government's measures are not directed

specifically at Egyptian workers but rather apply to all foreign workers without discrimination.

The labour law stipulates that workers must obtain a permit prior to entry in the country and can only be employed in areas open to non-Jordanians.

The ambassador said the new measures will benefit Egyptian workers if they are legally employed because their rights will be well protected.

He said he agreed with Farhan on maintaining contacts to deal with any obstacles that could impede the implementation of the new measures.

Riyad also called on the

Egyptian community in Jordan to adjust to Jordanian laws and regulations concerning employment and to cooperate fully with the authorities.

More than 100,000 Egyptian workers have already met the new regulations and obtained valid work permits.

Also Saturday, Public Security Department Director Nasouh Muhieddin said his department will enforce the residency and aliens laws in line with the government's reorganisation of the labour market.

At a meeting attended by directors of police departments in the governorates and heads of border posts

around the country, Muhieddin said visitors to the country who wish to work should obtain work and residence permits before they are employed.

Employers have the responsibility of ensuring that they employ legal workers, who Muhieddin said should carry the required permits wherever they go.

Unemployment has been officially estimated at about 15 per cent, while independent sources say it could be as high as 27 per cent. An estimated 300,000 to 500,000 workers live in the country, of whom only about 40 per cent hold valid permits.

Specialised substance abuse centre to open later this year

By Suha Ma'ayeh

MAHES — A state-run centre specialised in drug-related problems will open its doors later this year to offer treatment to Jordanian and Arab substance abusers, Health Ministry officials said Saturday.

The JD4.5 million National Centre for Drug Addiction, located in Shafa Badran, near Amman, is being partly financed by the European Union, they added.

Its 10 various departments, built on 125 dunums, will focus on offering comprehensive psychological and social treatment to help change the lifestyle and behaviour of substance abusers.

Although no exact figures are available, dependency on alcohol is the most common form of substance abuse in Jordan, followed by sedatives and drugs such as marijuana, opium and heroin, officials say.

Some doctors say current traditional help offered by the police's Anti-Narcotics Department and the Mahes-based National Centre for Mental Health is not yielding the aspired "positive results" because the programme is not

focusing enough on the psychological and behavioural aspects of drug abuse.

The AND said last December that drug use had increased dramatically over the last few years with over 3,000 citizens suffering from drug dependency.

"In many cases, patients suffer relapses because current treatment focuses mainly on detoxification," said Mahmoud Sharif, a specialist in psychiatry and substance abuse treatment at the NCMH.

"Even though there are support and group therapy sessions that are held at the centre three times a week, there is no follow-up on the cases," added Jalal Qardan, NCMH general manager and head of the psychiatric department at the Health Ministry.

Strict social taboos discourage many substance abusers from seeking treatment.

Sharif and other senior clinical psychologists are currently training the new hospital's 60-strong team at the NCMH. The staff includes behaviour specialists, occupational therapists, psychiatric nurses and specialists in substance abuse treatment.

Surviving on limited staff and funds, the centre will offer a two-phase treatment to patients, Sharif said.

"In the first stage, substance abusers will undergo a two-week detoxification period during which they will be put on medication inside the hospital to combat withdrawal symptoms," Sharif told the Jordan Times.

Group therapy sessions and individual psychotherapy will be offered during the second phase of treatment.

"Behavioural treatment... a change of attitude will render positive results, and this can be achieved through lectures, individual psychotherapy, group therapy sessions and religious advice," Sharif explained.

Weekly treatment sessions, including a monthly follow-up, will be offered to discharged patients.

Many psychiatrists said treatment of substance abuse is not always guaranteed. Hence, prevention programmes should be integrated into school curricula to raise the awareness of youngsters about the complications that could arise from substance abuse.

Rapid socio-economic

changes, the Kingdom's openness to foreign countries and thousands of Jordanians who travel abroad to continue their higher education are blamed by doctors and sociologists on the rising number of drug users.

In addition, Jordan's geographic location between countries supplying and consuming drugs has lured many drug smugglers who often dump some of their goods on the local market. Many Western governments are helping Jordan's narcotics department decrease the volume of drugs reaching them via Jordan.

Information Minister Nasser Judeh told a press conference early last month that the amount of heroin seized by the AND from 1996 to 1998 equalled the amount seized during the previous 20 years, thanks to new measures taken by the department.

In 1996, the AND brought 326 drug-related cases before the authorities: 556 Jordanians and 100 other nationals were involved. In that year, 1,349 kilograms of hashish, 67.1 kg of opium, 1.1 kg of cocaine and around 25 million pills,

including tranquillisers and stimulants, were also seized.

In 1997, 492 drug cases were prosecuted; in these 701 Jordanians and 102 other nationals were reported to have been involved. In the same year, 894 kg of hashish, 82 kg of heroin, 22 kg of opium, 237 grammes of cocaine and around two million pills were seized.

This year, the department has so far prosecuted 336 drug-related cases involving 581 Jordanians and 48 other nationals. The department has seized 33 kg of hashish and 29 kg of heroin.

The rehabilitation centre, set by the department in 1994, has treated 283 substance abuse patients from 1995 to 1998, officials said. Thirteen were under the age of 20, 161 were between 20 and 29, 75 were between 30 and 39, 32 were between 40 and 49 and three were over 50 years old.

A 15-member technical committee chaired by the minister of social development and grouping members from several ministries, NGOs and the AND is setting a national plan to curb substance abuse, according to Sharif.

Leftist deputy to defend vote of confidence in government

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The opposition will hear Deputy Mohammad Ouran, secretary general of the leftist Arab Land Party, explain his vote of confidence in the government of Faysal Tarawneh at a special meeting on Monday.

Sources said Ouran and his party could face expulsion from the Higher Committee for Coordination Among Opposition Parties if the Tafleeh deputy fails to convince his fellow opposition leaders on the reasons behind his support for the Tarawneh government in the Sept. 24 confidence vote.

Ouran provoked an uproar in the ranks of Jordan's 13 opposition parties when he joined 63 other deputies, including Islamists Abdullah Akaleh and Mohammad Azaydeh, in giving a thumbs-up to Tarawneh's 23-member Cabinet.

"What mostly enraged many [in the opposition] is that he took the decision without consulting other deputies," said Salem Nahhas, leader of the leftist Hashd party.

But Ouran did not appear

worried on Saturday and said he did not feel he would be put "on trial."

"It is their right to ask and my right to answer," he said, adding that his party, which fully supported the decision to vote in favour of the government, will soon issue an open letter explaining its position on the issue.

"We made a decision based on what we thought was right."

Ouran said his defence before the Higher Committee will hinge on the fact that halting normalisation with Israel and calling on all Arab countries to break the eight-year embargo against Iraq were among the demands presented by the group of 53 deputies he joined in a unified confidence statement.

"The party considers these as priorities, and we wanted to give the government a chance to do something good in these two directions," Ouran told the Jordan Times.

He also stressed that the confidence granted to the government by the 53 deputies was conditional on a parliamentary review of the Cabinet's performance after a six-month period.

what's going on

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

"Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Oct. 8, include:

EXHIBITIONS

- * 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hiari at the Main House.
- * Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.
- * Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.
- * Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'seh at the Museum.

FILM

- * "Diva" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh on Monday Oct. 5 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

CONCERTS

- * Concert marking International Tourism Day at the Odium Auditorium, near the Hashemite Square on Monday Oct. 5 at 7:00 p.m.
- * Classical and jazz music by Ilcectrob of Germany at the Royal Cultural Centre on Monday Oct. 5 at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

- * "The Generation of 1898 and the Spanish Contemporary Literature" (in Arabic) by Dr. Antoine Khater at the Faculty of Arts, University of Jordan at 1:00 p.m.
- * "Globalisation and the Cultural Identity" (in Arabic) by Al Tayib Tizini at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman on Monday Oct. 5 at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Paintings by Iraqi artist Talal Mikha'il at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 8.
- * Amman Seventh International Book Exhibit at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain, until Oct. 10.
- * Works by graduates of the Arts Centre (including ceramics, paintings, and sculpture) at the centre, Mahmoud Irani St. (Tel. 5529619), until Oct. 8.

Lobby group urges deputies to work toward freezing ties with Israel

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — A popular lobby group fighting "normalisation" with Israel on Saturday urged Lower House deputies to follow up on their recent request that the government freeze ties with the Jewish state.

The executive committee of the Jordanian Popular Conference for Safeguarding the Homeland and Confronting Normalisation, headed by Islamist leader

Ishaq Farhan, called on deputies to take all measures available under the Constitution, the National Charter, and Lower House regulations to activate last month's statement against normalisation.

Fifty-three deputies on Sept. 23 presented a unified statement during the debate on the vote of confidence to the new government of Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh "demand[ing] a halt to normalisation with

Israel, as we see this process is only serving Israel's interests."

The move was viewed as particularly significant because three parliamentary blocs in addition to independent and opposition figures put their weight behind the motion.

Palestinian-Israeli negotiations have been deadlocked for 20 months, and the Lower House's demand for halting normalisation was interpreted by many as a fur-

ther signal that Jordanians were becoming more and more impatient and frustrated with Israel's intransigence towards the Palestinians.

"Public opinion and the popular conference consider it only natural that deputies will now follow up on this declared position, which reflects the beliefs of not only the majority of the [80-member] House, but of the people as well," Farhan said in a press release issued yesterday.

Seminar finds 'shame culture,' high costs preventing psychiatric treatment

By Munther Murjan

AMMAN — Many Jordanians appear to shun the idea of visiting psychiatrists because of a prevailing "culture of shame" and relatively high treatment costs, participants at a recent seminar said.

The seminar, entitled "Fear of Visiting Psychiatrists," also stressed that most health insurance firms do not fully cover the cost of psychiatric treatment.

"The problem is that Jordanian society regards those suffering from psychiatric disorders as having problems with their personalities instead of looking at it as a purely medical problem," Mohammad Kannan, head of the Jordanian Association of Psychiatrists, told the gathering held late last month.

"People try their best to conceal their psychiatric problem[s] and avoid visiting a psychiatrist until it is too late for treatment or it reaches a very difficult point," he added.

There are no official figures on the number of Jordanians receiving some form of psychiatric help, but several hundred visit doctors at private clinics. In a society where the per capita income is \$1,400, however, paying

JD10-20 for a 10-minute session is outside the reach of many Jordanians.

"The 'shame culture' is the main reason behind the reluctance of people to seek professional psychiatric help when it is needed," the headmistress of a private school in Amman told the audience.

She said he had come across several cases of worried parents and frantic students who decided to shun psychiatric help because they were worried of what others would say and think about them.

Mazin Rashid, manager at the National Centre for Psychiatric Health, said that in some cases, families had even tried to discourage their members from becoming professional psychiatrists.

"When I wanted to specialise in psychiatry, my parents and my wife stood against me," he said.

"Secrecy and the need to protect the patient's privacy is enforced in our profession much more than in other medical professions," argued Kannan. "I would not even tell the brother of a patient what is wrong with him."

Under Jordanian law, it is illegal to discriminate against psychiatric patients, including denying them

employment opportunities.

"Unlike widely held beliefs, there is nothing in the law that could be used against them," Kannan added.

Others at the seminar blamed society's negative image of psychiatrists on the media, which they said portrays physicians as "eccentrics" who normally use shock therapy to treat their patients.

"The media is responsible for this negative stereotyping of psychiatrists," said Tareq Kannan, another physician who attended the seminar.

The seminar also looked into ways of encouraging general physicians to identify patients who need psychiatric treatment to help them cut down on costs of conducting further medical tests for problems that normally result from a psychiatric situation.

The level of public-administered psychiatric treatment in Jordan has come a long way over the past years, participants said, with a hospital bed per patient and segregated wings for men and women at the National Centre for Psychiatric Treatment in Fuheis.

"We have more open-minded professionals now and we have better facilities," said Rashid.

Delegation to attend Arab housing conference in Rabat

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in a conference in the Moroccan city of Rabat this week to mark Arab Habitat Day, one event under an international day to be observed this year under the title "Towards More Secure Cities."

The director of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation, Yousef Hiyasat, said Arab delegates to the Oct. 5-7 conference have set an agenda focusing on means of dealing with habitat challenges in the 21st century.

Hiyasat said the U.N. Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is co-sponsoring the event along with the housing ministries of Arab countries and the Arab League.

The conference will examine urban policies adopted by Arab countries, problems facing urban development and solutions for housing problems, Hiyasat said.

He said the conference also aims at helping Arab states draw up more effective programmes in cooper-

ation with their respective private sectors and non-governmental organisations.

Referring to Jordan's plans, Hiyasat said the country has adopted a strategy based on partnership between the public and private sectors in carrying out housing projects, such as the housing estate currently being built near Abu Nuseir, northwest of Amman.

The corporation is trying to involve local municipal councils in executing housing projects and will soon publish manuals on building codes for housing units, he added.

The corporation is also implementing a series of decisions approved by the Cabinet in March 1996 to restructure the housing sector.

Hiyasat noted that since its establishment, the corporation has built 119 housing estates with 33,841 units at the cost of JD276 million for the benefit of 245,000 people.

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Government survives big Labour swing in Australian election

SYDNEY (AFP) — Prime Minister John Howard's conservative coalition has won a second term in government after surviving a huge swing to the opposition Labour Party in Saturday's Australian election.

"It is clear the coalition will have a working majority in the new parliament," Howard told hundreds of cheering party supporters who packed a hotel ballroom to hear his victory speech.

He congratulated Australians for embracing the bold and unpopular economic reform that he always knew would make or break his political career.

Labour leader Kim Beazley was defiant in defeat, claiming the biggest swing for a first-time opposition party since World War II.

"The Labour party is back in town and we approach the next three years with great confidence," he said.

The big loser was far-right MP Pauline Hanson whose career appears to be over after she lost her seat and her fledgling One Nation party failed to win a foothold in the new parliament.

With nearly 75 per cent of the vote had been counted, Labour appeared to have won more than 51 per cent of the vote and up to 20 new seats, but failed to

totally demolish the coalition's 40-seat majority.

It won a swing of more than five per cent but much of it was "wasted" in safe Labour electorates.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television projected the coalition to lead Labour by 78 seats to 69 but it will be days before a final outcome from the extremely close-run race is determined.

Junior coalition partner, the National Party, lost just one seat and defied predictions the 1998 election would be its last stand after One Nation decimated its support in rural and regional Australia.

"I am declaring victory for the National Party over One Nation," said a jubilant Nationals leader Tim Fischer, who is Howard's deputy.

"There are a lot of problems out there, there is a genuine protest," he said. "But what is clear tonight is that the anti-trade, racist element of One Nation has been rejected by the Australian people."

One Nation Senate candidate and chief strategist David Oldfield conceded it was a disappointing day for the party which once boasted it would win the balance of power in both houses of parliament.

"That's certainly gone wrong. We're not very happy about that but we'll have to battle on regard-

less," he said.

The major parties had vowed to unseat Hanson by combining their support under the preferential voting system to prevent her from winning unless she managed to secure more than 50 per cent of the vote.

Howard staked his future on economic reform including what polls showed was an unpopular 10 per cent goods and services tax (GST), sweetened with 13 billion Australian dollars (\$7.8 billion) in income tax cuts.

He used the global economic crisis to justify calling the election eight months early, appealing to Australia's 12 million voters to trust his Liberal-National coalition's sound economic management to weather the storm.

Beazley, who took over after Labour lost government two and a half years ago, had waged an all-out campaign against the GST claiming it will force up prices without adequate compensation to lower and middle income earners.

Special Minister of State Nick Minchin said it was the first time ever a political leader had sought a mandate to introduce a new tax system and described the result as terrific.

"It's a magnificent achievement for John Howard to win government again putting forward a whole new tax system," he said.



Australian Prime Minister John Howard holds out his voting cards as he prepares to cast his ballot at the Gladesville High School in his electorate of Benelong. Australians went to the polls today in what was tipped to be one of the tightest federal elections in Australian history (Reuters photo)

Kosovo quiet; border incidents reported

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — With NATO hardening threats of military intervention, Yugoslavia's province of Kosovo was reported quiet on Saturday but there were allegations of shooting along its border with Albania.

Western diplomats in Kosovo said most areas appeared free of military action as Western political leaders prepared a final decision on whether to override Russian and Chinese objections and unleash punitive air strikes against Serbian authorities.

These would be designed to punish Serbian-led federal Yugoslavia for defying international pressure to end a bloody crackdown on pro-independence ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and force moves towards a peace settlement.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen warned of NATO intervention within two weeks unless Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic halted the Kosovo conflict and started talks with Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority.

Yugoslav army tank units and other troops have mostly withdrawn to their barracks during the past week after Belgrade said its offen-

sive against separatist ethnic Albanian guerrillas had been completed.

A different tune came from Tirana with Albanian authorities accusing Serb forces of firing with grenades, machine guns and mortars Friday on a northern Albanian village near the border post of Pogaj.

Albania's interior ministry called the incident an attempt to draw Tirana into a wider Balkan conflict.

The Yugoslav army, however, reported that its border post Gorozup, in mountains above the southwest Kosovo town of Prizren, came under automatic weapon and rifle-propelled grenade attack Friday from the direction of Pogaj.

Neither side reported casualties. Wednesday, the Yugoslav army said it lost six soldiers in a similar incident in which military sources said more than 50 Albanians fired at Yugoslav border posts from Albanian territory.

The Yugoslav Foreign Ministry filed a protest with the Albanian Embassy in Belgrade.

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) insurgents are known to have maintained rear bases and supply depots in northeastern Albania.

The reports of border incidents coincided with Serb statements that heavily armed special police units which battled the KLA had also withdrawn to bases.

The Yugoslav state Tanjug news agency said a new provisional Kosovo provincial government formed under Belgrade's direction had appointed 18 members from all ethnic communities in Kosovo, including Albanians.

But none of the ethnic Albanian leaders who have led the pro-independence movement in the province appeared to have taken part.

In Belgrade, Tanjug said the federal parliament would meet Monday to discuss the Kosovo crisis.

Also Saturday, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was reported to be putting the finishing touches on a crucial report on the Kosovo situation.

The report was expected to determine whether Belgrade had complied with demands for a ceasefire and stopped repressive actions against ethnic Albanian civilians.

Western nations want the report as political and legal justification for possible NATO air strikes in Kosovo.

France winds down 93 years of conscription

PARIS (AFP) — Some 15,000 young Frenchmen Saturday trooped into military bases and schools for a one-day cram in defence and patriotism as the country turned a page on 93 years of conscription.

Instead of spending 10 months in barracks, the youngsters turned 18 will spend a single day watching films that highlight a nation's need to defend its values while also presenting the French armed forces as a potential employer.

The weekend sessions will be the final chapter in a French institution — conscription of all 18-year-old males — dating back to 1905 that survived two world wars and a series of colonial conflicts.

During the daylong session, opening at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m., the youngsters will also be tested for literacy as part of a scheme to eradicate illiteracy in the country.

The one-day cram, known as "Call-up for Defence Preparation" (ADP), will be obligatory for all 18-year-old males and will be extended to young women in 2000. A certificate of ADP attendance will

be required for youngsters over 18 seeking to enrol for exams or pass their driving license.

The scheme follows a 1996 decision by President Jacques Chirac to restructure the country's defence industries, trim the armed services and end universal conscription to opt instead for a professional force.

His deep reforms of the defence forces and industry caused dissent within the army though it followed the views of Chirac's political mentor Charles de Gaulle, who favoured a purely professional force.

Under the scheme, dozens of barracks have been closed down, regiments disbanded and navy vessels and aircraft abandoned, causing protests in provincial towns where servicemen and defence plants often powered the local economy.

France currently has Europe's largest armed force, 381,000 troops including around 160,000 conscripts. Germany has 347,000 troops, 152,000 of them conscripts.

But the Gulf war demonstrated how poorly adapted the

French army is to modern conflicts. While Britain, which ended conscription nearly 40 years ago, sent 30,000 men, France could only muster 12,000 from an army twice as large.

Under the five-year defence reform plan, from 1997 to 2002, armed forces personnel will be cut back gradually by around 23 per cent to number 328,000 professionals to which France is hoping to add 27,000 volunteers.

A further 600,000 conscripts, all of them youngsters who had postponed their 10-month term of duty in order to terminate their studies, will be called up before 2002 to help man French defence in the transition to a professional force.

Meanwhile, the ADP programme will see 156,000 youngsters complete the daylong course this year and 750,000 in 2002.

Defence Minister Alain Richard has described the one-day call-up, that plays up the traditional French values of liberty, equality, fraternity and nationhood in general, as "a step towards citizenship."

Russian opposition marks anniversary of White House storming

MOSCOW (AP) — Opposition demonstrators marched through Moscow Saturday to mark the fifth anniversary of the bloody clash between government forces and opposition lawmakers in the Russian capital.

About 1,000 people, waving Soviet-era flags and anti-government banners, marched from the Lenin monument on Kaluzhskaya Square along the same route to the Russian White House that protesters took five years ago. Russian television reported.

The marchers carried signs demanding the resignation of President Boris Yeltsin and the replacement of the current government by Socialism.

A separate group of several hundred earlier held a rally at the Ostankino television broadcasting centre, where dozens of people died in clashes with interior ministry troops.

The events of Oct. 3-4,

1993, were set off when Yeltsin decided to dissolve the conservative, Soviet-era parliament.

Hardline lawmakers refused to disband and barricaded themselves inside the White House. The standoff erupted into violence when an angry mob of supporters broke through police lines into the building and armed hard-liners later attempted to storm the Ostankino television broadcasting centre.

The next day, Yeltsin called in troops and tanks that shelled parliament and forced his foes to surrender.

An estimated 200 people died in the violence. About 350 demonstrators, organised by Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov, gathered Saturday morning at the television centre to pay tribute to those who died.

Anatoly Kryuchkov, an organiser of the march to the

White House, the government headquarters that then housed parliament, said Zyuganov's morning rally had probably caused attendance at his demonstration to dwindle.

"It would have been better in the evening when the shooting took place at Ostankino," he told reporters.

Kryuchkov, who heads the hard-line Russian Communist Workers Party, said the party led by Zyuganov and the trade unions had become opportunists. "They are a political lightning conductor wasting the energies of the works," he said.

He said a national day of protest on Oct. 7, organised by the Communists and trade unions, will amount to nothing but "air shaking."

Kryuchkov said demonstrators should act decisively "and picket the buildings of official structures and stay there until the chief officials have resigned."

Life returns to normal in Bangladesh after century's worst floods

DHAKA (AFP) — Tens of thousands of people crammed into buses and trains Saturday to visit families outside Dhaka cut off for nearly three months by the country's worst floods this century.

Many passengers carried cash, clothes and medicines for people in need in their home districts, transport officials said.

Dhaka, home to nine million people, appeared deserted as many residents took advantage of a bank holiday weekend to go on mercy missions to needy relatives.

Road and rail links have been gradually restored over the past week, with all affected districts declared flood-free.

The floods, which lasted nearly three months, submerged two-thirds of the country and left more than 1,200 people dead, 30 million homeless and devastated agriculture, industry and infrastructure worth millions of dollars.

A World Food Programme (WFP) spokeswoman, meanwhile said here Saturday that Bangladesh would have 500,000 tonnes of food by December, with supplies of cereals promised by the United Nations and other donors.

"The bulk of our pledged 355,000 tonnes of food aid

will arrive in Bangladesh by December along with those committed by other donors will bring the total to 500,000 tonnes," WFP's Susan Manuel told AFP.

She said the second shipment of 21,847 tonnes of Canadian wheat reached Bangladesh Saturday and a third was expected to arrive Oct. 13 bringing the total WFP aid to 52,000 tonnes.

This was in addition to the government stock of more than 600,000 tonnes.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed during a tour Saturday of flood-hit remote Mithamoin village in northern Kishoreganj district ordered authorities to construct homes for those made homeless by the floods.

"My government will provide food until the next harvest ... (and) start large scale" programmes to create employment for the victims, the official BSS news agency quoted her as saying.

The area has only one rickshaw which the prime minister used to move from one place to another, witnesses said.

The people of Dhaka have been slowly getting their lives back to normal, and amusement parks have been packed.

"Business is again pick-

ing up after the floods ... we had good business today," one saleswoman at Dhaka's Wonderland Park said late Friday.

Parents said they had taken their children out after weeks confined to their homes by the floods.

"It was not only suffering, but it was also suffocating," said housewife Runa Islam at the park, as her children licked ice cream.

"Getting out of home meant crossing dirty flood water and it was risky to travel back at night."

Mobile restaurants are also seeing better times. "The fear of disease is over and our business is good," one vendor said at Dhaka Manik Mia Avenue, a popular place for Dhakaites.

Hundreds of boats, which became the main mode of transport during the floods, are being stockpiled and covered in protective oil and kept for the next flood season.

Newspapers reported farmers were slowly rebuilding their homes and sowing rice paddy saplings and winter vegetables.

Officials earlier said diarrhoea cases were being reported from different parts of Bangladesh and the water-borne disease has so far killed 636 people.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan 'disappointed' over postponement of Clinton visit

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan said Saturday it was "disappointed" at the postponement of U.S. President Bill Clinton's planned November trip to South Asia following the nuclear tests by Islamabad and New Delhi. "We are disappointed that the United States, for its own reasons, has not found it possible to take a final decision with regard to the president's visit to Pakistan," foreign office spokesman Tariq Altaf told reporters. Pakistan would "welcome the president's visit whenever it can be scheduled," he added. The White House announced the postponement Wednesday, saying May's nuclear tests by India and Pakistan had clouded prospects for a "productive series" of talks over issues such as nuclear arms and export controls. But White House spokesman Michael McCurry added that Clinton was still keen to come to South Asia. "The president is still eager to make the visit when we have had further significant progress with our respective security concerns," he said.

ICAO approves global aeroplane safety controls

MONTREAL (AFP) — The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) approved plans for mandatory security checks on aeroplanes belonging to its 185 nation members. In their first meeting of the past three years, the U.N.-affiliated ICAO unanimously agreed Friday to focus on aeroplane navigation systems and employee training in countries being audited. The mandatory safety audits will be carried out on a regular basis, according to the new rules. If rules are being broken, national authorities will be notified and told to rectify the situation within a reasonable time frame, after which the audit report will be given to other ICAO members to be made public. The draft plan had earlier been presented to the heads of civil aviation around the world, ICAO officials said.

New York man gets four years for cheating scam

NEW YORK (UPI) — A 48-year-old California man has been sentenced in New York to four years in jail for helping more than 500 people across the country cheat on standardised tests required for undergraduate and graduate schools. Po Chiang Ma, who also goes by the name of George Kobayashi, was convicted today of running a company that provided students with pencils covered in coded answers shortly before an exam in exchange for thousands of dollars. Prosecutors said Ma's company advertised nationally in foreign-language newspapers and on cable television stations. Students who were willing to trade cash for answers were given a choice of three cities where they could cheat on the test: Los Angeles, New York or Chicago. Prosecutors said Ma operated his scheme by having a team of crack test takers take each exam in New York City using assumed names. Relying on the three-hour time difference, the test-takers would phone Ma's Los Angeles office with the correct responses. The answers were then quickly coded on pencils by Ma's employees and distributed to the students. The prospective students hired Ma's company to help them cheat on the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), Graduate Record Exam (GRE), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) between January 1993 and October 26, 1996. Ma has been held in prison without bail since he was caught trying to flee the country into Canada in January 1998.

Texas trooper-shooting suspect dies

FORT WORTH, Texas (UPI) — Fort Worth police have confirmed that the 23-year-old suspect in the shooting of a state trooper died during surgery Friday at Harris Methodist Hospital in Fort Worth. Charlie Edward Cook was shot and captured by police during a confrontation at a convenience store that injured another officer and a police dog. Both officers and the dog are expected to recover. Cook was pronounced dead at 10:11 p.m. Friday. A tip led officers to the store. Cook was already wanted by the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department at Fort Worth for aggravated robbery with a firearm, aggravated assault of a public servant and possession of a prohibited weapon. Texas Department of Public Safety spokesman Tom Vinger says Cook was sought in the shooting of state Trooper Earl Gillum Thursday night during a routine traffic stop. DPS spokesman Tela Mange says Gillum was shot three times as he approached the suspect's pickup truck east of Granbury. The incident was caught on a video camera in the DPS cruiser. Gillum is listed in fair condition at Fort Worth after surgery to repair bullet wounds to his arm, leg and face. The suspect fled after shooting Gillum, but Mange says: "A passing motorist saw what happened and called for assistance on the trooper's handheld mike. We're very thankful to that witness." Gillum is 35 and married with two daughters, ages 9 and 5. The name of the officer wounded Friday night was not immediately available.

Father of Cherie Blair marries for the fourth time

LONDON (AFP) — Tony Booth, the 64-year-old actor whose daughter Cherie is married to Prime Minister Tony Blair, tied the knot for the fourth time Friday. For his new 43-year-old wife, Stephanie Buckley, it was a fifth marriage. The couple have 11 children between them. They had their marriage blessed in a church at Walton, on Merseyside, in northwest England, not far from Blackpool where the governing Labour party has just wound up its annual conference. Tony and Cherie Blair were in the congregation. Cherie's mother Gale Smith was Tony Booth's first wife, with whom he had four children. Cherie is the eldest, and the same age as his new wife. Tony Booth sprang to fame in the early 1960s with the cult television series "Till Death Us Do Part." After the service, Cherie Blair said: "It was a most appropriate service and it was beautiful."

pointed' over of Clinton visit

Pakistan said Saturday that the postponement of Clinton's visit to Islamabad was a disappointment. The Pakistani government has not found reasons for the decision with regard to the visit. Foreign officials said the visit was postponed. The White House said Clinton's visit to Pakistan was postponed. Clinton's visit to Pakistan was postponed. Clinton's visit to Pakistan was postponed.

global aeroplane controls

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) approved plans to control aeroplanes flying over the Atlantic. In their first meeting, the ICAO members agreed to focus on aeroplane safety. The ICAO members agreed to focus on aeroplane safety. The ICAO members agreed to focus on aeroplane safety.

gets four years ing scam

A 40-year-old California man was sentenced to four years in prison for a scam. The man was sentenced to four years in prison for a scam. The man was sentenced to four years in prison for a scam. The man was sentenced to four years in prison for a scam.

voting suspect dies

A 23-year-old man died after a vote. The man died after a vote. The man died after a vote. The man died after a vote. The man died after a vote.

Blair marries fourth time

Tony Blair is married to his fourth wife. Blair is married to his fourth wife. Blair is married to his fourth wife. Blair is married to his fourth wife. Blair is married to his fourth wife.

Mongolian democracy leader killed

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (AP) — President N. Bagabandi appealed for calm Saturday following the assassination of a prominent democratic leader, a killing that could further complicate a lengthy political crisis. Sanjaasuregin Zorig, minister for infrastructure in the ruling Democratic Coalition and a possible candidate for prime minister, was axed and stabbed to death at his home late Friday night.

The murder may further shake public confidence in the fledgling democracy, which has been embroiled for about four months in a political stalemate that has paralysed work on crucial economic reforms. "I challenge everyone to be disciplined about this serious crime that has shocked our society. I urge you not to get involved in any kind of sensationalist stories," Bagabandi said in a public address expressing condolences to the family of the slain politician. Bagabandi said he was confident that the attackers, who remained at large, would be brought to justice.

The reason for Zorig's assassination remained unclear. Some analysts speculated that the killing could have been linked to organised crime or to a private business deal. Zorig, a popular figure who played a leading role in the 1990 democratic revolution that ended seven decades of Stalinist rule, had been widely expected to be named next week as a possible successor to Prime Minister Tsakhiaagin Elbegdorj, who resigned on July 24 along with his entire cabinet. "I can only express my shock and dismay at this tragic event. Zorig was widely respected as a leader of the democratic movement in Mongolia," said U.S. Ambassador Alphonse F. La Porta.

The ruling coalition has considered and failed to agree on four earlier candidates. Zorig, a 36-year-old Moscow-educated former social sciences professor and a member of parliament since 1990, would have become the fifth nominee. The crisis was precipitated when the three-month-old coalition government lost a vote of confidence following a feud over whether to merge a state bank with a private bank. The opposition Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the former Communists, accused the government of organising the merger in a way that financially benefited its members and protested by boycotting the Great Hural, Mongolia's parliament, throwing proceedings into turmoil. The coalition government had 30 days to reorganise itself and nominate a new prime minister, but has failed to do so. The political impasse has prevented work on crucial economic legislation. Mongolia, a landlocked Central Asian nation flanked by Russia and China, used to be dependent on subsidies from Moscow and has seen its economy weaken precipitously since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. The vast, sparsely populated land was once the heart of the largest empire the Earth ever knew. But according to World Bank estimates, 36 per cent of its 2 million people now live in poverty. Inflation topped 30 per cent last year and unemployment is high. Forty per cent of the population are nomadic herders. Peaceful protests in 1990 forced the pro-Soviet People's Revolutionary Party to drop Communism and allow free and fair multiparty elections. Its 75-year rule ended with a 1996 parliamentary election that swept the reformist Democratic Union into office and won accolades for the nation's progress towards democracy.



German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (left) follows his designated successor Gerhard Schroeder and wife Doris during festivities for the eighth anniversary of German unity in Hanover (Reuters photo)

Kohl honoured at last German Unity Day as chancellor

HANOVER, Germany (AP) — Germany marked its last unification day holiday with Helmut Kohl as chancellor Saturday by honouring him for his crowning achievement in office: reunifying Germany. Defeated last week in his bid for an unprecedented fifth term, Kohl sat in the front row during the official ceremony at the Hanover congress centre, but did not speak. His words brought sustained applause from the hundreds of invited guests. "Kohl lost the election, but that doesn't change what he's done for Germany," one guest, Peter Imhoff, a state official in Hesse, said afterward. Czech President Vaclav Havel, the guest of honour, said German unification "was good for the whole world" because it meant the end of an "evil" system of Communism. But Schroeder noted the economic and social upheaval that followed the demise of East Germany

"I think this is a good moment to remind people about that," Chancellor-elect Gerhard Schroeder said, expressing his "respect" for Kohl. "And I'm sure the people in Germany won't forget it." Schroeder, who led the Social Democrats' defeat of Kohl last week, played host to the national celebrations in his role as president of parliament's upper house. His words brought sustained applause from the hundreds of invited guests. "Kohl lost the election, but that doesn't change what he's done for Germany," one guest, Peter Imhoff, a state official in Hesse, said afterward. Czech President Vaclav Havel, the guest of honour, said German unification "was good for the whole world" because it meant the end of an "evil" system of Communism. But Schroeder noted the economic and social upheaval that followed the demise of East Germany

and the one used in Communist East Germany. Conservatives accused Schroeder, whose state government commissioned the piece, of desecrating the national anthem and insulting the victims of East Germany's totalitarian regime. Bavarian leaders boycotted the ceremony. But even Kohl clapped politely when the composition including the anthem was played. And German President Roman Herzog dismissed the fuss as overblown. "Our state can endure that, and it's symbols, when we value them enough," he said. The people of former East Germany will be remembered not by their old anthem, he said, but by the chant heard during the candlelight marches that eventually brought down the Communist leaders: "We are the people." The audience applauded in response.

The ceremony was preceded by a political fight over an original musical work mixing portions of the German national anthem and the one used in Communist East Germany. Conservatives accused Schroeder, whose state government commissioned the piece, of desecrating the national anthem and insulting the victims of East Germany's totalitarian regime. Bavarian leaders boycotted the ceremony. But even Kohl clapped politely when the composition including the anthem was played. And German President Roman Herzog dismissed the fuss as overblown. "Our state can endure that, and it's symbols, when we value them enough," he said. The people of former East Germany will be remembered not by their old anthem, he said, but by the chant heard during the candlelight marches that eventually brought down the Communist leaders: "We are the people." The audience applauded in response.

Communists clash on support for Prodi

ROME (R) — Italy's hard-nosed Communist leader Fausto Bertinotti Saturday urged his party to pull the plug on Prime Minister Romano Prodi, shrugging off warnings that could send the country lurching to the right. "I propose that the political committee give a mandate to (party deputies) to vote against this budget and to withdraw their backing for the government," Bertinotti told a two-day meeting of Communist Refoundation grandees which will decide whether to maintain support for Prodi and back the 1999 budget. Hardliners in the party, which though not part of the government gives Prodi a majority in the lower house Chamber of Deputies, are warring with moderates over whether to topple Italy's first leftist government. At stake this weekend is not only the fate of the centre-left government, Italy's second longest administration since 1945, but the unity of Refoundation itself. Moderate party chairman Armando Cossutta warned that a break with the government could split Refoundation, send it into "inevitable isolation" and open the door to the right. Either Prodi would have to scrape together a majority with votes from the

centre-right, or — were he to reject that option — a "technical" caretaker government with more right-wing, welfare-unfriendly policies would be installed, Cossutta said. Prodi has insisted he is not prepared to govern with any other majority than that with which he took power in April 1996. Refoundation's 338-strong political committee is largely dominated by hardliners and Trotskyites, so the odds favour a Bertinotti win, putting the government into jeopardy. The party has 34 deputies in the lower house. Though among them the moderate line is thought to prevail, they are expected to vote in accordance with the political committee's decision. If the Marxists mutiny, Prodi may be obliged to offer his resignation to President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. The head of state is unlikely to accept the offer immediately, and would probably ask Prodi or another political leader to try to form a new government to avoid early elections. This time last year, Refoundation brought Prodi to his knees in a row over the 1998 budget, forcing the premier to offer his resignation before accepting a string of labour and pensions concessions in return for

continued support of the government. The 1999 draft budget that Bertinotti rejects has a distinctly more welfare-friendly feel than 1998's austere package, which was heavily focused on getting Italian public finances into shape for European monetary union. The package contains incentives worth nearly 40 trillion lire (\$25 billion) to help cut unemployment, especially in the impoverished south — proposals that the hard left had demanded last autumn when they opposed the 1998 budget. But Bertinotti, dubbed "Mr. Nyet" in the Italian press, said Prodi had turned a deaf ear to Refoundation demands. "The government has turned itself into a 'Mr. No' on all our requests, and the logic of the budget runs counter to all our proposals," he told the political committee meeting. Gianfranco Fini, leader of the far right National Alliance, said Prodi's loosely-woven coalition was finally unravelling — and not before time. "All its life, Prodi's government has been focused on holding together that which cannot be held together," Fini told a business conference in Capri. "This is the end of a farce."

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Treating the Asian disease

THE SO-CALLED "Asia contagion" which is spreading to the four corners of the world is forcing the major industrial countries to reconsider the existing international economic and financial systems and propose the establishment of a new global financial order. The group of 22, comprising financial leaders from the major Western countries and a select number of developing countries such as India, Indonesia, China and Russia, will meet tomorrow in Washington to examine what can be done to contain the proliferating financial and economic woes affecting an ever-increasing number of countries.

The financial crisis that started in the Far East in the summer has already reached Russia and Latin America. Even the U.S. is now affected by the fallout from the Asian contagion despite its robust economy. It was British Prime Minister Tony Blair who first suggested that the time was ripe for a review of the existing economic and financial order. At the start of his mandate, the British prime minister proposed "ethical investments," an initiative that aimed to break away from raw and crude free market economy that lacks a social purpose.

When free market economy started to show signs of strain in the Far East, existing financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank seemed unable to cope with the magnitude of the emerging crises. Now it has dawned on the major industrial nations that what is needed is not only extra funding to these international monetary institutions but also a new perspective and outlook on how to conduct the increasingly dependent global economies. No country or economic ideology appears ready to offer a universal panacea to the expanding economic woes that appear to afflict so many nations across the globe.

U.S. President Bill Clinton is calling on the U.S. Congress to provide extra funding to the IMF. This could be part of the solution, but how can a mere \$18 billion help solve the economic and financial problems of the world especially since Brazil, Mexico and other Latin American states seem to be on the verge of catching the Asian disease?

There is now an urgent need to determine whether free market economy and privatisation can work everywhere and under all conditions. Greater transparency as has been suggested by the IMF would go a long way to alleviate the accumulating economic burdens. But is that the only wrong with the existing order? We trust that the group of 22 meeting in Washington will come up with a more ingenious plan of rescue for the faltering global economy. We need to know precisely what went wrong and then address thoroughly and effectively the malaise after it has been properly identified.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek made a comparison between foreign financial support for Jordan's civil organisations, and the same kind of aid received by similar organisations elsewhere in the region. The Kingdom's research centres, women's societies and others receive around \$4.2 million per year, while similar bodies in Palestine and Lebanon get \$28 million per year, he said. People who work in social, ideological and voluntary fields either do not know how to look for funding resources or are afraid of accusations and criticisms for receiving such funds, Fanek said. This matter needs a comprehensive dialogue in order to form an acceptable basis to deal with the issue, because without foreign funds civil organisation will "die and vanish." In the writer's opinion, funds which come from "respectable" parties without conditions, have to be accepted and this will not harm the country's "independence and credibility."

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek, in a separate column, said the next six months will be decisive for the Palestinian Authority in facing the "final battle" with Israel to establish the Palestinian independent state. Jordan has to be prepared for the movement, which will "shock" the Middle East, because it will be affected neither positively or negatively, he said. No "miracles" will occur in the next six months because the Israeli policies are designed to drop the Oslo agreement and the declaration of the Palestinian state will be one-sided, Fanek said. The Israeli reaction will be unknown, but they will then face an independent state which is not committed to any security agreement.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Economic growth in 1998

IN ITS annual report for 1997, which was just released, the Central Bank of Jordan made a daring speculation for the economic outlook of 1998, and put expected growth rate of GDP this year at 2.5 per cent. The population of Jordan on the other hand is growing at the compound rate of four per cent a year, of which 2.6 per cent represents the reduced net natural growth, and 1.4 per cent represents unabated influx of refugees from the occupied territories and returnees from the Gulf states.

Based on the above two sets of facts, we can conclude that per capita income, and consequently the standard of living of the people, will decline in 1998 on average by around 1.5 per cent, causing the quality of life to deteriorate even further. 1998 will be the third year where official statistics show a retreat in the standard of living. Decline was 3.1 per cent in 1996, 1.8 per cent in 1997.

The Research Department of the Central Bank is of course entitled to make its own educated guess on the growth rate of 1997, which the report covers, but it was not under obligation to commit itself to a guess on the

growth rate in the following year, unless the report was merely quoting the forecast of another competent and independent institution such as the experts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the Technical Committee the credibility of which came recently into question, in which cases the forecast will be made without any responsibility on behalf of the Central Bank itself.

It seems at the moment that the available economic indicators so far, do not warrant the speculation that growth rate in 1998 may reach 2.5 per cent. Such a level looks unrealistic in the circumstances. Imports for instance, as a rough indicator of the volume of general consumption, are running at 4.5 per cent below last year, while exports on the other hand, as a rough indicator of the volume of production, are 6.5 per cent below last year. Let alone the shortfall in expatriates remittances, the further drop in share prices, the rise in budget deficit due to lower revenues, and other not so good indicators. It is only fair for the new government to have the pre-

sent situation accurately defined so that it will not be blamed for failure if the growth rate in 1998 turned out to be less than 2.5 per cent or is even negative.

Based on the declared principle of transparency, it is worthwhile to state, well in advance, that the real economic growth rate in 1998 may be negative, that unemployment may exceed 22 per cent, and that the line of poverty rose to cover around one third of the population.

These are the difficult and perhaps alarming facts which the new government has inherited. The new government claims that it will revitalise the economy, face up to unemployment and poverty, and tackle such other heavyweight jobs as resumption of economic growth.

We can't pre-judge the performance of the new government and its ability to fulfil all the explicit and implicit promises it made in its long policy statement to the Parliament. All that we know is that it will have to start from a point below zero, in an endeavour to put its head, and ours, above water.

Dr. Fahed Fanek

U.S. pressure, PNA concessions

By Pascal B. Karmy

WHAT DID Dennis Ross' latest mission achieve? Apparently nothing save perhaps the agreement of both Netanyahu and Arafat to go to New York to meet Ms. Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, on the occasion of the 53rd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This infinitesimal result could have been achieved without Ross coming to the Middle East.

President Clinton's administration is trying however to insinuate that some progress has been achieved without mentioning any specifics. On the contrary, Netanyahu persisted in allowing tens of settlements to be built, ordered the building of fixed houses in Hebron itself, ordered the preparation of tenders for building settlements in Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) and lastly allowed the Jewish millionaire Moskovitch to build housing units in Ras Al Amoud in the heart of the purely Arab quarter of East Jerusalem.

All the above clearly show that Netanyahu no longer heeds American efforts and does not care at all to implement the second stage of the deployment of Israeli forces. It is true that Netanyahu is apparently prepared to withdraw from 10 per cent of the West Bank and another 3 per cent should remain a national reserve under the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) control without allowing the latter to build there or change its demography. Moreover, Netanyahu's agreement or offer was made subject to many conditions amongst which is the cancellation of certain provisions of the Palestine National Charter, a commitment by the PNA to combat terrorism and a reduction in the numbers of the police force etc. But the PNA has already cancelled the relevant provisions of the Palestine Charter and has fought, and is fighting terrorism.

What is essentially required is that Israel should first accept the American proposals relating to the withdrawal of 13.1 per cent of Palestinian territory and then negotiate on conditions of mutual interests; in other words Netanyahu should first put the horse before the cart and not

the contrary, as withdrawal of Israeli forces is one of the essential conditions of the Oslo accords. It should be recalled that according to the Hebron agreement which was concluded with Netanyahu himself at the beginning of 1997, Israel should effect three withdrawals from the West Bank amounting in total to 90 per cent of the Palestinian territory.

The PNA is in a dilemma; it cannot implement by itself the second stage of withdrawal of the Israeli army as it is the weaker party, nor is it supported by the U.S. Indeed not only is the latter not taking measures to honour its proposal vis-a-vis the Palestinians, it has not dared to announce it or declare it officially. What is more surprising and disappointing at the same time, is that the U.S. is not even prepared to declare the name of the party which is responsible for the failure to implement the proposed initiative. In other words the U.S. is putting the PNA and Israel on the same footing of responsibility although time and again the PNA has announced its full acceptance of the American initiative.

One wondered if Albright could exert more pressure than Dennis Ross and succeed in convincing Netanyahu to accept the 13.1 per cent initiative when she met him in New York after she has tried to do so several times in the past fifteen months of stalemate? Apparently she has not succeeded as the news from New York indicate. Nor can President Clinton himself bring pressure to bear upon Netanyahu to accept the American initiative at a time when the president is bogged down in Monica Lewinsky affair.

The Palestinians through the PNA have made many concessions amongst which is the full acceptance of the American initiative of 13.1 per cent withdrawal even though the Israel army should withdraw at a higher percentage during the second stage. Therefore, inasmuch as Israel is not implementing either the spirit nor the letter of the Oslo accords, inasmuch as the PNA is willing and ready to fully implement those accords and inasmuch as the interim period of five years stipulated in the Oslo accord of Sept. 13, 1993, will expire in May 1999, the PNA may

declare the creation of the state of Palestine.

Even regardless of those accords the Palestinians are entitled to the right of self-determination which is consecrated in Article I, paragraph 2 and article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, the General Assembly of the United Nations has passed a decision, amongst many others, in its 1996 session which confirmed the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

It is recognised under international law and practice that all peoples and nations are entitled to the right of self-determination. In Resolution 637 A (VII) of Dec. 16, 1952 the General Assembly of the United Nations recommended, inter alia, that "the states members of the United Nations shall uphold the principle of self-determination of all peoples and nations" (Vide Principles of Public International Law by Ian Brownlie at page 594 et seq.).

Accordingly, the PNA which is recognised by the international community including Israel as the only representative of the Palestinian people, can therefore proclaim the Palestine state by virtue of the right of self-determination. The claim made by Netanyahu that he will be entitled to annex the West Bank or part of it in the event that Arafat proclaims the state of Palestine before reaching a final agreement with Israel, according to the Oslo accords, is baseless for the following grounds: Israel as an occupying power cannot legally annex occupied territory in accordance with the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949; Netanyahu himself is responsible for delaying the implementation of the Oslo accords especially the non-acceptance of the American initiative of withdrawal of the Israeli forces and which constitutes the second stage of those accords; and, as explained above, the Palestinians who count more than five million people have the right to self-determination and therefore to the creation of their own state.

The writer was an advocate in Palestine in 1944 and, for many years, legal officer at UNRWA headquarters in Beirut and Vienna.

LETTERS

Setting the record straight

The following letter was submitted by Zahid Said, the Pakistani ambassador to Jordan.

To the editor:

THE ARTICLE "Iran-Taliban Standoff, the stakes are high" dated Sept. 29, 1998, states: "Should open military conflict erupt between Iran and the Taliban, the stakes will be high, and no state bears more responsibility for the consequences than Pakistan."

For the record, I would wish to state that it is in Pakistan's national interest to have a united, stable and peaceful Afghanistan. In order to promote this, Pakistan is the only country which has been in continuous touch with all the parties of the conflict, with a view to promoting a cease fire and a broad-based government in Afghanistan. It is a matter of historic record that Pakistan has held the greatest number of meetings on its soil of all Afghan parties to promote unity and has extended the most help to OIC and U.N. initiatives.

In the current situation, the possibility of intervention in Afghanistan by over a quarter of a million Iranian troops now poised close to Afghan borders and an impending attack by Ahmad Shah Massoud forces on Kabul, with obvious external support, is a matter of grave concern for all those desiring peace in the region.

In these circumstances, the Government of Pakistan has sought to defuse the tension. On the one hand, Pakistan's foreign minister visited Tehran in an effort to lower tensions there, and on the other hand, it has facilitated and encouraged a return of Iranian prisoners taken by the Government of Afghanistan during operations in Mazar-e-Sharif. Pakistan has always promoted peace in Afghanistan and has made continuous efforts to reduce tensions between Afghanistan and its neighbours. Pakistan is gratified that the brotherly country of Iran is exercising patience in the matter and the recent statements emanating from Tehran are conducive to a peaceful settlement of their dispute with Afghanistan.

I would also like to reiterate that Pakistan has not adopted an interventionist policy in Afghanistan and has urged other powers also to refrain from this as the consequences would be disastrous. The differences between Afghanistan is an indigenous phenomenon in the aftermath of Soviet occupation which must be settled by them alone through consultations and negotiations. Third countries can, at best, facilitate dialogue between the various Afghan factions and help U.N. and OIC initiatives.

The argument expressed in the article that the unfortunate killing of diplomats by some renegade soldiers of the Afghan government justifies military intervention in self-defence is not valid. Article 51 of the charter is confined to self-defence "when an armed attack occurs against a country." To promote such a wide interpretation of Article 51 would be setting a very dangerous precedent which will undermine the U.N. Charter itself. It may be recalled that Pakistan's embassy in Kabul was attacked in September 1995 and burnt with the encouragement of the previous Afghan government. Pakistan's ambassador and other officials were repeatedly stabbed and left for dead by the officially inspired mob and one was killed. However, Pakistan had not used that incident as a cause for intervention, but had shown great patience in resolving the matter amicably. For this reason, the government of Pakistan has been urging the government of Iran, with which it enjoys traditional friendly relations, to seek a peaceful settlement, particularly as the Afghan government has committed itself to punishing those renegade soldiers who were responsible for the killing of Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif. Pakistan itself has strongly condemned this and has made its position known to the Afghan government.

Tikriti defection deprives Iraq of funds

P.V. Vivekanand is a former editor of the Jordan Times, and is now with Gulf Today.

THE REPORTED defection of Barzan Ibrahim Hassan Al Tikriti, Iraq's erstwhile permanent delegate to the U.N. in Europe, could prove to be a severe blow to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein at a critical moment, according to experts in the region.

They point out that despite his pointed defiance of repeated orders from Saddam for his return home in the last five years, Tikriti held the central string to the Iraqi leader's clandestine funds in Europe amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Beyond that, Tikriti, a half-brother of Saddam, could prove to be a treasure trove of information on the activities of the Iraqi regime if he opts to cooperate with Western and American intelligence agencies—a possibility that most experts tend to discount.

"It is unlikely that Tikriti would squeal state secrets and the gory details of the regime's actions because he cannot do so without implicating himself," said a highly informed Arab source.

"He has been part and parcel of the regime as much as Hussein Kamel had been," added the source, in a reference to Saddam's son-in-law, who fled his country in 1995 but returned seven months later and was killed.

There is almost no agreement among analysts and observers that Tikriti would not be any luckier than Hussein Kamel to be accepted as a genuine leader of the Iraqi opposition.

"His hands have been as bloody as Saddam himself as far as the opposition is concerned," said the Arab source. Washington, the leader of the anti-Iraq camp in the West, will find itself hard put to cut a deal with Tikriti, whose name appears prominently in an official list of "people with terrorist links" and whose assets and bank accounts are ordered frozen by the administration.

However, now that he is no longer entitled to diplomatic immunity, he could be pressured into making voluntary disclosures—in return for immunity from prosecution in the West. Those disclosures could be potentially harmful not only to Saddam but also to hundreds of individuals and companies in the West which had

secret links with the Iraqi regime.

Beyond that, estrangement with Tikriti also deprives Saddam of access to his funds held outside the country—or whatever is left of such assets.

Through sheer cunning and elaborate camouflage, Tikriti, described by former associates as an "exceptionally Westernised Arab," is believed to have kept the bulk of Saddam's funds beyond the reach of the West's sequestration of all Iraqi assets held abroad following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

During his exile in Jordan between August 1995 and February 1996, Hussein Kamel confirmed in private conversations that Tikriti controlled a major part of Saddam's funds abroad and denounced the man, who once headed Iraq's dreaded secret police.

"Barzan is the kind of person who does not attach value to anybody," Hussein Kamel told Time magazine. "He was very harmful to the Iraqi people—imprisonments, torture, executions." "If it is true that Barzan Al Tikriti has defected, then it means that Saddam is deprived of a good part of his clandestine holdings abroad," according to a Cyprus-based Arab businessman.

"He operated dozens of bank accounts in Europe and offshore banking units under assumed names and proxies, and these accounts were largely used to pay for Iraqi imports of food and medicine through a labyrinth of banking transactions," said the businessman.

While serving the Iraqi regime's interests, Tikriti is also believed to have siphoned off part of the funds assigned to him to his personal accounts.

The sweeping trade embargo imposed on Iraq by the U.N. following the invasion of Kuwait made "things a lot murkier for the authorities in Baghdad to keep a clear account of the funds under its control," said the businessman.

"In many cases after the sanctions were imposed, proceeds from the sale of smuggled Iraqi oil were sent to accounts controlled by Tikriti, from where they were supposed to have been spent on Iraqi imports," added the businessman.

Before the Gulf crisis, Tikriti played a key role in Iraq's armament programme in terms of acquiring

equipment and technology to develop weapons. But, according to European sources, such imports came to an end in mid-1991.

"There is no indication that Tikriti or any other Iraqi diplomat abroad was engaged in procuring arms technology or equipment after mid-1991," according to a well-informed European diplomat. "None of the reports that Iraq continues to develop weapons despite the sanctions could be corroborated," said the diplomat.

While in Baghdad immediately after Saddam took power in 1978, Tikriti was involved in the country's weapons development programme both directly and indirectly, according to published reports. Hussein Sharistani, a Canadian-trained Iraqi scientist who has fled the country, has indicated that Tikriti played a role in Iraq's efforts to develop a nuclear bomb in the early 80s. Sharistani, who was the top scientific adviser to Iraq's nuclear energy commission, has said that he was asked in 1979 by Saddam Hussein to help develop a nuclear bomb. He said no and was immediately detained and tortured, he told Western reporters after fleeing the country.

While in detention, he was visited in September 1980 by Tikriti, who was then head of the Iraqi secret police, and who told him that Saddam regretted his arrest and needed his services for his country.

"Tikriti said Iraq needed an atom bomb because it would give us a long arm to rearrange the map of the Middle East," Sharistani said, adding that he refused and was sentenced to life imprisonment for the next 10 years.

Tikriti also visited him several times in jail thereafter in an effort to persuade him to change his mind, according to Sharistani, who was rescued from prison by an unidentified official during the chaos of the Gulf crisis sparked by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Barzan, who was assigned to the Iraqi U.N. mission in Geneva shortly before the invasion, was the longest-serving Iraqi ambassador abroad until an order issued in June asked him to return home.

He refused and has apparently taken advantage of a business residency given to him by the Swiss government to stay in the country despite the loss of diplomatic status.

While it is assumed that fears stemming from his long-

running conflict with Saddam's eldest son, Uday, are behind Tikriti's refusal to return home, informed sources say that he could also face Saddam's wrath for alleged misuse of funds.

"In the three years after the Gulf war, it was chaos in Europe when it came to Iraqi orders for food and medicines," said the Cyprus-based businessman. "There were a lot of crossed wires all around: hundreds of middle men running around trying to secure reconfirmations of banking documents issued by the Central Bank of Iraq, performance guarantees, offers and counter offers for anything and everything from rice from India to frozen chicken from Venezuela," he said.

"In most cases, all the trails led back to Barzan Al Tikriti, whose personal approval was needed for the release of any money—but of course for a price," according to the businessman. "Tens of millions of dollars changed hands in bribes disguised as commission," he added.

In 1993, "several tonnes" of gold were sent to Geneva by the Iraqi regime, which wanted the proceeds from the sale of the metal to be deposited in "a personal account," but Tikriti, who orchestrated the sale, simply "diverted the money to other accounts," according to the businessman.

Tikriti's running conflict with Uday—mostly stemming from his opposition to Saddam grooming his son as his successor—was supposed to have been buried by the marriage between his daughter, Saja, and Uday. But the marriage collapsed and Saja now lives with her father in Geneva after complaining of physical and emotional abuse.

At every given opportunity, Tikriti and Uday have been attacking each other in the past few years.

In comments to the Western media, Tikriti has described Uday as "crazy, greedy and unfit for power" while Uday used his Babel newspaper to level charges of corruption and inefficiency at his co-father-in-law.

"Iraq is not a monarchy," Tikriti was quoted by London's Al Hayat newspaper as saying in a late 1995 interview. "The direction towards the inheritance of power in Iraq is unacceptable."

"If I oppose, I will do it in my own special way."

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordan's ambassador to Iraq advises traders and industrialists on best ways to win bigger share of the Iraqi market

JORDANIAN TRADERS and industrialists should make regular visits to Iraq and carry out awareness programmes in the various fields and media, especially the Iraqi Television, to promote Jordanian products, Jordan's ambassador to Iraq, Hmoud Qatameh said in an interview published Saturday.

Qatameh recalled in this regard the efforts of many traders from countries neighbouring Iraq who make regular visits to the extent that some of them cross the Iraqi border carrying the goods on their shoulders to consolidate the position of their country in the large Iraqi market. He gave as an example in this context Syrian traders who carry large volume of goods that flood the Iraqi market at a time that coincides with major promotion campaigns in the Iraqi media.

Answering a question about the Jordanian pharmaceutical industries, the ambassador stressed that Jordanian drugs enjoy an excellent standing and indicated that the Iraqis prefer use the medicines produced in Jordan over any other medicine. Qatameh said the Iraqi minister of health told him that the Jordanian drugs are very distinguished and they meet the generally-recognised specifications and standards.

The ambassador revealed that some countries neighbouring Iraq were behind a campaign against Jordanian products, especially drugs, in an attempt to take the Kingdom's medicines out of the large Iraqi market. "The embassy, in cooperation with the concerned authorities, was able to counter the allegations which described the Jordanian medicines as not fit for consumption," he said.

Qatameh stressed that the Jordanian media should always be present in Iraq to cover events and news whether economic or otherwise. He noted that the embassy sends daily reports to the Ministry of Industry and Trade on commercial and industrial developments.

Qatameh also stressed the need for Jordanian exports to abide by the regulations set by the Ministry of Industry and Trade to avoid any problems noting that Jordan has signed a JD200 million trade accord with the Iraqi government within the framework of the fourth stage. He called on the traders to work and coordinate with the government to market Jordanian products in the Iraqi market.

The ambassador highlighted the cooperation from the Iraqi side and urged the Jordanian exporters to show their capabilities in the Iraqi market in order to raise the ceiling of the fourth stage to more than JD200 million. He mentioned the JD10 million deal won by the Elba company to supply Iraq with buses.

The ambassador indicated that Iraq is now in need of paper, books and school supplies estimated to cost JD100 million but he stressed that suppliers should abide by the delivery schedule and that the products should be in conformity with specifications. He noted that the Iraqi government has awarded a tender for the supply of textbooks to Jordanian print shops but the suppliers did not meet the delivery timetable and that caused problems for the concerned Iraqi ministry.

Qatameh concluded by calling on the concerned parties in Amman to find the suitable solutions for some of the products which do not conform to specifications noting that most products meet the required local and international standards (Al Aswaq).

Government alters terms for JTC privatisation and asks foreign bidders to submit final offers

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — The government has asked companies vying for a 40 per cent equity stake in the profitable state-owned Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC) to submit their final offers by mid-October, officials said.

On Thursday, the government sent an amendment to its information memorandum (IM) to British Cable and Wireless and Southern Bell of the United States asking them to send their final price and outlined several changes to the original terms of the memorandum.

Cable and Wireless and Southern Bell, the two contenders for the stake offered to foreign investors, have already submitted their indicative prices to the government.

According to officials, while the amendments maintain the same ownership shares, 40 per cent for the strategic partner and 60 per cent for the government, the state will have the right to sell another nine per cent of its shares.

The nine per cent can be sold to JTC employees on preferential terms or could be offered for private placement to provident funds of state enterprises.

Another change, which could have a serious impact on the final offers, is that the mandate of the executive board, where the major-

ity in the seven-seat board will be held by the strategic partner, will come under review when the JTC exclusivity period runs out in the year 2002.

The review clause was not in the original conditions set out in the memorandum by Merrill Lynch, the American firm which the government appointed along with local partner, the Expert and Finance Bank, as its financial advisor to the sale.

Despite the apparent step forward in a much delayed privatisation deal of the state-owned firm, some officials and industry insiders have privately voiced doubt whether the deal will go through as it is now envisaged.

Officials maintain the government expects to sign a deal with the strategic partner by Dec. 15. According to the original schedule set two years ago

when the process started in earnest, the partner should have concluded a deal by Aug. 31.

Privatisation of the telecommunications firm nearly collapsed last summer when an earth station, Hashem I, initially used to connect the Al Hussein Medical Centre with the Mayo Clinic, started providing international circuits to Internet service providers and the National Information Centre.

A licence to operate as a fully-fledged privately-owned telecom firm, Hashem I, would have eroded JTC's monopoly—a major prize for the foreign bidders.

The privatisation plan was salvaged after the government suspended licensing plans for Hashem I and appointed Ali Shukri, a senior palace official in charge of communications who ran Hashem I, as the new chairman of JTC.

But the deal was thrown into doubt again when the new head of the company said he saw no need to sell the 40 per cent stake in the company.

At a Parliament hearing held by the House Financial Committee Thursday, the government and Shukri differed on the merits of proceeding with the sale — reflecting the still unresolved debate about bringing in a strategic partner for JTC.

According to parliamentary sources at the meeting, Shukri again voiced his reservations about bringing in a strategic partner — echoing the view held by many deputies wary of foreign domination of the economy and the impact on state employees.

"After attending the House meeting, I am no longer confident that the JTC will be privatised," said one of the attendees. "If this sale does not go through, it could have grave consequences on the country's credibility and ability to attract foreign investment."

According to informed sources, the contradictory statements and lack of a unified policy will be discussed between His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani and Shukri who are currently in the U.S.

Officials and deputies said the deciding factor will be the prices offered for the 40 per cent share of the company.

U.K. Price Waterhouse Consultants had valued the company's asset at around \$1 billion, according to industry sources. When Shukri took over, he brought in the accounting firm of Arthur Anderson to reevaluate the firm's assets.

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TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 03/10/1998

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / R	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANSACTIONS	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
S 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	17.5	93	15	930	201060	216.50	214.00	2.50
S 1.940	1.560	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	12.6	4.52	5	2600	4030	1.56	1.55	.01
S 1.200	1.000	BANK OF JORDAN	8	0.00	4	5000	5130	1.02	1.03	.01
S 1.300	1.100	MID. EAST. TRV. BK.	61.7	0.00	1	2250	2115	.90	.94	.04
S 2.680	1.550	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	11.1	6.56	2	880	441	1.58	1.58	.00
S 6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	18.3	3.47	25	8360	2410	2.80	2.88	.08
S 3.450	1.750	JOR. MORTG. BK.	8	0.00	7	357	627	1.80	1.76	.04
S .870	.560	JOR. CTRY. BANK	0	0.00	3	2550	1428	.57	.56	.01
S 3.910	1.690	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.4	0.00	10	8217	8908	1.12	1.10	.02
S .850	.600	PHILADEL. INV. SE.	0	0.00	9	11500	7590	.67	.66	.01
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 281.29	CHG: -1.02	81	39044	255414			
S 2.850	1.830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	7.3	9.62	2	1000	2600	2.65	2.60	.05
S 1.310	1.080	HOLY LAND INSUR.	8.2	0.00	1	500	550	1.20	1.10	.10
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 125.89	CHG: -0.23	3	1500	3150			
S 2.240	1.430	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.6	5.57	3	900	1332	1.49	1.48	.01
S 4.030	1.600	TRID. ELECTRICITY	10.4	5.95	8	1900	3155	1.60	1.68	.08
S 1.340	.710	NATL. PORTFOLIO	28.3	0.00	1	200	142	.72	.71	.01
S 9.950	5.100	ALARA	8.4	7.10	3	186	1017	5.60	5.48	.02
S 4.600	1.880	JOR. INTEL. INV. EDUC.	9.4	2.11	10	15300	29070	1.90	1.90	.00
S .990	.880	ZAKKA EDUCATION	20.8	0.00	2	2500	2250	.90	.90	.00
S 1.800	1.060	UNIFIED CO.	5.0	9.73	1	750	848	1.14	1.13	.01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 106.27	CHG: -0.20	34	21800	38093			
S 3.820	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.1	5.88	9	966	1814	1.88	1.87	.01
S 6.500	3.850	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	19.0	5.18	2	7500	29150	3.86	3.86	.00
S 11.250	10.050	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.43	5	650	6930	10.65	10.55	.10
S 5.950	4.450	JORDAN TRADING	7.8	8.25	3	1000	4850	4.85	4.85	.00
S 4.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.3	2.85	22	9192	24170	2.65	2.63	.02
S 8.540	6.500	ARAB CHEM. DISTR.	7.5	7.41	2	200	1350	6.85	6.75	.10
S 6.350	4.700	DAR ALKADMA DV. INV.	6.5	6.52	1	250	1340	5.38	5.36	.02
S 2.980	1.700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	13.3	13.99	2	400	717	1.80	1.80	.00
S .530	.390	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	13.2	0.00	6	1576	814	.39	.39	.00
S .930	.670	ARAB PAPER COV. IND.	23.5	0.00	4	25500	19630	.77	.77	.00
S .750	.370	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	5	2485	1039	.41	.42	.01
S .570	.300	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	0	0.00	10	13550	4028	.30	.29	.01
S .710	.380	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	7.2	0.00	5	5250	1995	.39	.38	.01
S 1.100	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	4.64	0.00	2	2000	2480	1.25	1.24	.01
S 1.260	.930	UNIV. MODN. INDUS.	10.0	9.52	11	5450	3492	.65	.63	.02
S .920	.480	JOR. INFO. RESOURCES	0	0.00	3	2050	1025	.51	.50	.01
S 1.080	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.7	16.13	6	10900	6218	.63	.62	.01
S 1.310	.910	INTL. TORRACO	7.2	5.46	7	18700	19078	1.02	1.03	.01
S .890	.660	JORDAN STEEL	9.5	8.24	3	1080	916	.85	.85	.00
S .730	.580	NAT. ALUMINIUM	33.2	0.00	5	3050	2044	.68	.67	.01
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 77.40	CHG: -0.25	111	111749	132599			
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 169.90	CHG: -0.79	229	174093	430255			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 03/10/1998										
S 1.050	.860	EXPORT & FIN. BKT. 75	16.1	0.00	1	1000	620	.87	.87	.00
S 1.000	.700	JOR. INT. INSURANCE CO	0	0.00	1	150	117	.74	.78	.04
S 1.230	1.000	ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO	94.5	0.00	1	4750	4750	1.00	1.00	.00
S .620	.240	UNION INV.	0	0.00	1	7000	3720	.63	.53	.10
S 2.220	1.050	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	0	0.00	6	20750	4980	.25	.24	.01
S .260	.150	JOR. INFO. RESOURCES	0	0.00	3	72250	8248	1.09	1.07	.02
S .430	.230	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	25.3	0.00	11	40250	8905	.23	.22	.01
S .580	.260	NATL. MOLT. ENG. HANICO	0	0.00	11	29100	7857	.27	.27	.00
S .690	.560	HIDRANT PRIN. 90°	0	0.00	1	500	235	.57	.57	.00
S .720	.570	RAZI FRASH.	0	0.00	2	800	472	.61	.59	.02
S .350	.180	INDS. ZEP.	0	0.00	3	4000	840	.21	.21	.00
S .860	.350	INDS. CEMIC	8	0.00	1	1000	340	.35	.34	.01
S .950	.540	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	0	0.00	21	69486	39346	.56	.57	.01
S 1.310	.760	NUTRIDAN	0	0.00	2	450	368	.82	.82	.00
S 1.000	.690	AL-SERIAL PRINTING CO	10.7	10.82	1	1000	700	.70	.70	.00
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 75	CHG: -0.25	75	262486	157897			

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You'd rather decide when to take action, and do it by yourself, but there are too many other people involved, and they all have agendas. They want you to do things a certain way; with luck, they'll tell you what those things are and how they want them done. If you really want to succeed, do what they want.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your house would be a great place for a party today. It looks like there's a lot of activity there already. If you have kids, they may have invited all their friends over. Looks like people could be coming from miles away. If you haven't already set something up, do so. You might as well take advantage of this situation.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You'll benefit this morning by doing what an older person wants. It won't be all that hard, either. Don't argue, even if you think you have a good point. You'll be learning something you can use later, and besides, if you're nice and gentle and polite and cute enough, you may get to go out tonight and play with friends.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You should be able to get quite a way today on very little money. In fact, you might even make money on the deal. If you have business you could do in another city, go scout out new locations. If you can get a bargain far from home, that's your excuse. Do something today that's not only fun, but profitable.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Go along with an older person's plan today, and you could be in for a pleasant surprise. This person will be more generous than you anticipated, but don't expect all the remuneration to be in money. Maybe none of it will be. The valuables you receive could be even more important than cash in making your dreams come true.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) The best games today involve a partner. The interaction will not only be fun, but motivational. Ask something to play who light you up. You tend to get down on yourself, because you're so tuned in to detail and such a fixer. You want to make everything work for everybody, but you can't. There's just too much. Today, lighten up!

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Most of today will be

about serving other people. Watch for things that others need, and provide them before you're asked. This is not easy for anybody, and even more difficult for you. Later tonight, you'll have a chance to ask for what you want. Make sure you're with the right person then.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Although you're relaxed by now, you may start noticing more jobs that need attention. This time it's your own idea, so it seems like more fun. You might even push someone else into helping, which isn't a bad plan at all. By bantering at least one other person to your side, you'll have a stronger chance of winning.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You should go full speed by now. You'll gain a lot of ground in a relatively short-time. You're taking what you previously learned and applying it to your own advantage, and you're getting a boost from loved ones and friends. Everybody wants you to win, and with good reason. When you win, everybody wins.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a good day to run errands, but get home early. Company could drop by, probably somebody you want to see. To make sure, why not call and invite the person over? It's OK to give things a push in the direction they're already headed, and it also helps you stay on a schedule if you do that.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) The sun in Libra and the moon in Pisces, going into Aries. You're lucky financially today, and that's always nice. That cheque in the mail could finally show up. You'll get a boost intellectually, too. You could get tired of waiting for someone else to find the solution, and simply learn how to do it yourself.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You're still on a roll, but be careful. You'll want to spend too much money, especially later in the day. You're so lucky, though, you might get away with it, especially if you're buying presents. Your thoughtfulness will be rapid a hundred fold. Be responsible and don't go into debt, but go ahead and be generous.

Birthstone of September: Opal — Tourmaline

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Skiing great Tomba officially calls it quits

ROME (AP) — Alberto Tomba announced his official retirement from skiing Saturday, ending a remarkable career in which he won three Olympic titles and a reputation for explosiveness on and off the slopes.

The man known as "La Bomba" (The Bomb) released a statement through the Italian news agency ANSA. Tomba's sister Alessia Tomba, who acts as his spokesperson, said Friday an announcement was forthcoming, but that the skier would not speak to reporters about the decision.

It was a muted end to a loud career.

Knocking through gates with the same disdain a boxer shows for an opponent, Tomba burst onto the scene with a bronze medal at the 1987 World Championships and went on to capture 1988 Olympic titles in the slalom and giant slalom. In 1992, he became the first Alpine skier to win the same Olympic event twice when he took gold in the giant slalom. Tomba also won silver medals in slalom at the 1992 and 1994 Olympics, the first skier with medals at three Winter Games.

The 31-year-old Italian's trophy case also has two gold and three bronze medals from World Championships, and an overall World Cup title.

He was likely the most outspoken and gregarious skier ever.

He dated a Miss Italy, was often spotted at late-night dis-



An undated file photo of three-season Skiing World Cup winner and Olympic medalist Italian Alberto Tomba, 31, who announced his official retirement Saturday. Tomba won the last race of the 1998 season, the slalom at the World Cup Finals in March, reaching the 50th career World Cup win, the second-most of all time (AP Photo)

cos and last year paid a fine for tossing a glass trophy at a photographer whose shots of Tomba in the nude had appeared in a magazine.

In July, a prosecutor asked for indictments for Tomba and his parents for tax fraud, alleging the family hid income of about \$12 million from 1990-96.

Tomba leaves on a winning note. He won the last race of the 1998 season, the slalom at the World Cup Finals in March, upstaging the favorites in one final show of flamboyance. It was his 50th career World Cup win, the second-most of all time.

"Some people say it is better to quit as a winner," Tomba said after that race.

A disappointing Nagano Olympics in February — he hurt his back in a tumble during the giant slalom — had fueled speculation Tomba might quit the sport.

"Up until today, word had not come from me or my family and I think therefore that only now can this announcement assume its true meaning," Saturday's statement said. "I reflected a lot before deciding, but I leave skiing with much affection for all of those who in these many years followed me and incited me to victory."

Tomba is currently working on his acting debut, a two-part television movie that will air in Italy next year, according to his sister. Appropriately, it is an action movie.

Rusedski and Siemerink breeze into semis

TOULOUSE (AFP) — Top-seeded Briton Greg Rusedski and second-seeded Dutchman Jan Siemerink on Friday breezed into the semi-finals of the \$400,000 ATP Tour event here.

Rusedski brushed aside the challenge of Frenchman Arnaud Clement and Siemerink ousted Swiss player Roger Federer — both winning in straight sets.

Big-serving Rusedski, 14th in the latest ATP Tour rankings, downed 20-year-old Clement 6-4, 6-1, taking just 56 minutes to advance.

Clement never recovered his composure after dropping his opening service game. Canadian-born Rusedski finished the match by winning six straight games.

Siemerink, 20th in the rankings, struggled in the first set against 17-year-old Federer before prevailing 7-6 (7/5), 6-2.

Federer, the Wimbledon junior champion playing in only his second ATP Tour event, underlined both his talent and lack of experience as he played impressively but lost the key points.

The top four seeds all advanced to the semis with third-seed Thomas Johansson of Sweden beating Frenchman Stephane Huet 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 and fourth-seed Nicolas Kiefer of Germany downing Marc Rosset of Switzerland 6-3, 3-6, 6-1.

Rusedski now plays Kiefer with Siemerink up against Johansson.

Bird, Wilkens among 7 enshrined in Hall of Fame

SPRINGFIELD (AFP) — If anyone has a chance to match the Hall of Fame double induction of Lenny Wilkens, it is Larry Bird.

Wilkens, inducted for his achievements as an National Basketball Association player in 1989, was among seven enshrined Friday in the Basketball Hall of Fame. This time, Wilkens was honored as a coach, making him the first double inductee from the NBA.

Bird went in as a player after a remarkable career with the Boston Celtics that ended in 1992. His induction came just five months after he was named NBA Coach of the Year in his first season with the Indiana Pacers.

The other inductees were former Harlem Globetrotters great Marques Haynes, ex-Rochester Royal and Boston Celtic Arnie Risen, longtime NBA coach Alex Hannum, University of Texas women's coach Jody Conradt and Yugoslavian coach Aleksandar Nikolic.

A crowd of 7,000, the largest to view an induction ceremony, was there to see Bird, a three-time NBA Most Valuable Player who led the Celtics to three titles. A 12-time All-Star, he

held or shared 27 Celtics records by the time he retired in 1992, making five appearances in the NBA Finals.

"I've always been a very proud individual. I'm very proud I came from a small town, French Lick, Indiana. I'm very proud I spent four years at Terre Haute in Indiana State. And yes, I'm very proud to have spent 13 years playing for the Boston Celtics," said Bird, who was introduced by former teammate Bill Walton.

"My first year as a Celtic coach (Bill) Fitch was my coach. He treated me like a player, worked me hard, taught me a lot about the game. He's made me what I am today."

After his retirement due to back problems in 1992, Bird became a consultant for the Celtics and somewhat reluctantly accepted the Pacers' offer to become their coach in the summer of 1997. Although he admitted he was somewhat uncomfortable in the role, the Indiana native led the Pacers to the best record in club history (58-24) and a trip to the conference finals.

While most of the spotlight shined on Bird, Wilkens joined the legendary John Wooden as the only dual inductees.

Wooden was inducted as a Purdue University player in 1961 and again in 1972 as University of California at Los Angeles coach. He guided UCLA three more seasons thereafter, completing a run of nine titles in 11 seasons.

Wilkens passed Red Auerbach as the league's all-time winner on January 6, 1995 when he secured his 939th victory.

Nikolic, known as the "Father of Yugoslavian Basketball," was recommended by the International Screening Committee. He compiled a 101-39 record as coach of the Yugoslavian National Team, led his team to victory in the 1977 European Championships and second-place finishes in 1961 and 1965, before capturing the 1978 World Championships.

He also posted an impressive 357-200 record at the club level in Europe. From 1969-73, Nikolic led Ignis Varese to three Italy Cups, three National titles, three European titles and two International Cups. The 1972-73 squad has been repeatedly voted as the greatest team in Italian and European basketball history.

Yankees mop up in rain-sodden Texas

ARLINGTON (AFP) — Not even an act of nature could stop the New York Yankees' drive to the American League Championship Series.

The Yankees waited through a rain delay of more than three hours, then completed their mopping up operation in the first round of the American League playoffs with a 4-0 blanking of the Texas Rangers.

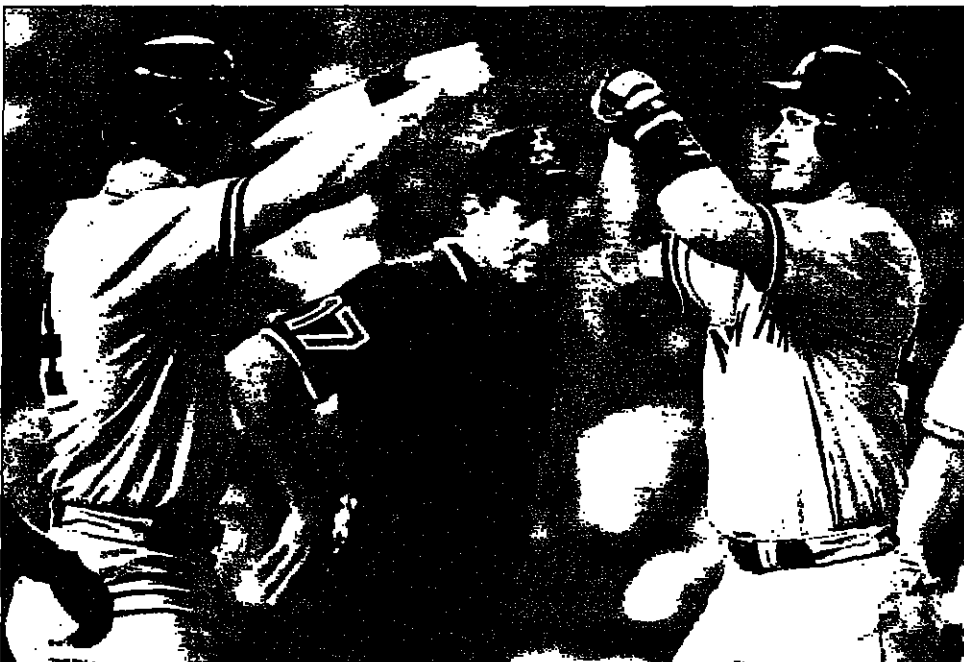
The Yankees held the AL's top hitting team to an astounding one run and 13 hits over three games and await the winner of the Boston-Cleveland series in the ALCS.

The Indians beat the Red Sox 4-3 in Boston Friday to take a 2-1 lead in their series. New York, which set an AL record with 114 wins during the regular season, will host Game One of the AL Championship Series on Tuesday night.

Sluggers Rusty Greer, Juan Gonzalez, Will Clark and Ivan Rodriguez were a combined 4-for-44 as Texas was ousted by the Yankees in the first round for the second time in three years. New York won in 1996, when the Rangers scored 16 runs in four games. This year's one run, in contrast, set a record for postseason futility. The Los Angeles Dodgers scored two runs in 1966 when they were swept in the World Series by the Baltimore Orioles.

David Cone was masterful in his 13th career postseason start, giving up only a leadoff single to Royce Clayton in the third inning and a one-out single to Todd Zeile in the fifth. He walked one and struck out six but did not come out after the rain delay with two out in bottom of the sixth.

Cone and the rest of the Yankees wore the No. 39 of teammate Darryl Strawberry on their caps. Strawberry remained in New York, where



New York Yankees Shane Spencer (R) gets a high five from teammate Tino Martinez after hitting a three-run homer off Texas Rangers starting pitcher Aaron Sele in the top of the sixth inning during Game 3 of the American League Division Series. Home plate umpire John Hirschbeck looks on (Reuters photo)

he was to undergo surgery Saturday to remove a cancerous tumor from his colon.

"It's been an unbelievably emotional couple of days," Cone said of the team's reaction to the news about Strawberry. "I've never been in a clubhouse that was so shocked."

When play resumed shortly before 1:30 a.m., Graeme Lloyd retired Greer on a groundout. Jeff Nelson issued a one-out walk in the seventh before striking out Rodriguez and Lee Stevens. He gave up a leadoff single to Zeile, but got Clayton to bounce into a double play and set Tom Goodwin down on a groundout.

Mariano Rivera issued a leadoff walk in the ninth but got the next three batters to finish it off.

Aaron Sele matched Cone through five innings but was victimized by the long ball in the sixth.

After Derek Jeter flied to the warning track in right field, Paul O'Neill lined a 1-1 pitch into the Yankees' bullpen in left-center field. It was his eighth career postseason homer and sixth in Division Series play.

Sele came back to strike out Bernie Williams, but Tino Martinez legged out an infield single and Tim Lincecum doubled. Shane Spencer, whose spectacular September earned him a spot on the postseason roster, followed with his second home run in as many games. The 26-year-old rookie hit Sele's first pitch into the second row of the left-field seats for his ninth homer in 33 at-bats.

In Boston, Manny Ramirez hit two of Cleveland's record-setting four home runs, including a solo blast in the ninth inning that proved to be the game-winner.

Charles Nagy exercised some playoff demons and

continued to dominate the Red Sox. He pitched eight sparkling innings for his first postseason victory since 1995 as Cleveland won its second straight to take a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five American League first-round series.

Ramirez's mammoth blast to left in the ninth was a lead-off shot against reliever Dennis Eckersley, who turns 44 on Saturday. Ramirez has a franchise-record 11 career playoff homers.

Mike Jackson came on in the ninth to preserve a three-run lead. He gave up a two-run homer to Nomar Garciaparra, but Mike Stanley and Troy O'Leary grounded to shortstop to end the game.

Ramirez hit his first two homers of the series, and Jim Thome and Kemy Lofton also slugged solo shots, doubling the previous team playoff record of two home runs, accomplished 13 times.



Poland's Andrew Golota, left, penetrates the defences of USA's Tim Witherspoon during the professional heavyweights bout in Wroclaw. Golota won the fight by unanimous decision (AP Photo)

Moya easily advances to quarterfinals

MALLORCA, Balearic Islands (AP) — Top seeded Carlos Moya of Spain defeated Thomas Schiessling Friday to advance to the semifinals of the \$475,000 dollar Mallorca Open.

Moya, who was a clear favorite and a local hero from this Mediterranean Spanish island, easily beat Schiessling of Austria 7-5, 6-4, in Friday's quarterfinal.

On Saturday, Moya will Fernando Vicente of Spain, who defeated fellow countryman Tomas Carbonell 5-7, 7-6 (8-6) and 6-4 in the second round. Vicente is ranked 78th in the world.

Eighth-seeded Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten took 1 hour, 19 minutes to defeat Sergi Bruguera of Spain, 6-4, 6-4.

Bruguera pulled off the biggest shock of the tournament when he beat fellow countryman Alex Corretja, ranked No. 7 in the world, on Thursday. But Bruguera could not repeat victory against



Carlos Moya

Kuerten, to whom he already lost in the final of the French Open in 1997.

Tomas Muster of Austria beat Germany's Tommy Haas 3-6, 6-3

and 6-4, and will play Kuerten in the semifinals Saturday.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hilham Yanes Theatre
	Laurence Fishburn & Andy Garcia .. in HOODLUM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	John Travolta & Olivia Newton-John .. in GREASE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam .. in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	CONCORD '1' NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria ARMAGEDDON Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Leonardo Di Caprio & Robert DeNiro .. in MARVIN'S ROOM Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Watch out for the new play

Wooden was inducted as a Purdue University player in 1961 and again in 1972 as a Los Angeles coach. He guided UCLA to three seasons thereafter, completing a run of nine titles in seasons.

Wilkins paved the way for Auerbach as the first all-time winner on Jan. 6, 1995 when he secured a 93-89 victory.

Nikolic, known as the "Father of Yugoslav Basketball," was recognized by the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) as the greatest coach of the Yugoslav National Team. He led his team to victory in the 1990 European Championship and second-place finish in 1994 and 1995 before turning the 1996 NBA Championship.

He also posted an impressive 557-209 record as a club level in Europe from 1969-75. Nikolic led his team to three Italian Cup titles, three National titles, two European titles and an International Cup in 1972-73. His squad has been repeatedly voted as the greatest team in Italian basketball history.



Andre Agassi from the United States returns the ball to Karol Kucera from the Slovak Republic during the semi final match of the Grand Slam Cup in Munich (Reuters photo).

Grand Slam Cup

Agassi not here for the beer

MUNICH (AFP) — Andre Agassi recovered from a trip to the Oktoberfest in time to score a storming 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 comeback win over Petr Korda at the \$6.7 million Grand Slam Cup on Friday.

The 28-year-old American pounced on the patchy form of Australian Open winner Korda to move into the semi-finals of one of the richest tournaments of the year.

Agassi made a flying visit to the world-famous beer-drinking festival earlier this week, timing the visit not to clash with his competitive schedule at the Olympiastadion.

"It (the beer) took a lot of energy from me," joked the world number eight, who received a wild card invitation into the event reserved for the best performers at the year's four Grand Slams.

"It didn't give me any power. But then everybody's telling me that the girls are going to get up on the table and take their clothes off."

"I didn't see any of that. I kept drinking, hoping that it would happen."

Back on court and back to business, Agassi continued the hot indoor carpet pace which he hopes will carry him through to at least a top 5 ranking over the next few months as he concentrates on tournaments in Europe.

Korda's game fell apart after a tough first set, the 30-year-old Czech producing 18 double-faults and 39 unforced errors.

Korda again ducked questions about his future in the game. He said in February after claiming the Melbourne title that he would decide his future "at the end of the year."

"It's not the end of the year. The end is when the last tournament is over. Until that time, I'm running on the same speed," he said.

Korda had four chances in the first half of 1998 to take over as world number one from Pete Sampras, but did not take any of the opportunities.

"I can say from the bottom of my heart that I did everything I could. But the guys at the time were producing better tennis than I was."

The Aussie Open champion was joined in exiting the tournament by Goran Ivanisevic, the Wimbledon runner-up behind Sampras.

Ivanisevic fell victim to Slovakia's Karol Kucera 5-7, 6-4, 8-6.

Agassi plays a semi-final Saturday against Kucera and Australian Mark Philippoussis takes on Marcelo Rios of Chile.

American Venus Williams moved into Sunday's women's final when she crushed Wimbledon finalist Nathalie Tauziat of France 6-4, 6-0.

Cramps forced Martina Hingis to quit late in the third set in her semi-final against fellow Swiss Patty Schnyder, handing her rival a 5-7, 7-5, 5-5 victory.

Hingis knows that she must save herself for a struggle next week in Filderstadt.

Hingis leads American Lindsay Davenport, the U.S. Open champion, by just 26 points in the WTA Tour table going into the Filderstadt tournament.

of USA's Tim Witherby and W. Gohatta won the right to

Quarterfinals

Watch out for the new play

Sports



Andre Agassi from the United States returns the ball to Karol Kucera from the Slovak Republic during the semi final match of the Grand Slam Cup in Munich (Reuters photo).

Kingdom's premier soccer competition resumes today

By Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — The Premier League Championship resumes Sunday with two more rounds remaining for the conclusion of the first leg of the country's leading soccer event.

The ten-team competition had been put on hold pending the return of the national team from the Arab Cup finals in Qatar where Jordan was eliminated in the first round after losing 2-0 to Qatar and beating Libya 2-1.

Going into the eighth week of the event, Al Faisali top the standings on goal difference after a 6-0 demolition of Kufroum while Al Wihdat lost the lead after suffering their first defeat of the event 3-0 to Al Hussein.

Top teams now have their lineups complete after they played the Jordan Football Association (JFA) Shield Championship without their national team players who were on duty with the Kingdom's team in the Arab Cup in Qatar.

Therefore, the final match of the Shield had unusual finalists this year as top teams like Al Wihdat, Al Faisali and Al Ramtha—all of whom have won the Shield four times—were eliminated early in the event.

Premier League newcomers Kufroum went on to win their first ever major soccer title when they took home the Shield, one of country's four elite annual soccer titles, after beating Irbid rivals Al Hussein.

Kufroum, who were only promoted to the prestigious top-ten group three years ago, now resume the Premier League with added confidence.

Other teams who had injured players like Al Faisali's Jiryes Tador and Jamal Abu Abed are back in action while others have served their suspensions during the Shield and are now back with their teams.

Kufroum meet Al Ramtha in Irbid today hoping to advance their current 9th place standing. Al Qadissieh face Al Arabi and Al Faisali meet Al Jazireh.

Shabab Al Hussein play Al Hussein while Al Wihdat meet last-placed Al Ahli Monday.

The Premier League Championship kicked off in April but has witnessed a series of delays starting with the month-long boycott of seven teams over the issue of ticket sales allocation before the JFA settled the dispute.

The championship then resumed only to halt again in June during which the national team prepared for the Arab Cup qualifiers. It then resumed Aug. 9 before its latest halt for the Arab Cup finals.

A sense of discontent now looms among soccer officials after Jordan was eliminated for the sixth time throughout their seven participation since the Arab Cup first kicked off in 1963.

Jordan achieved the best result in the 5th Cup hosted in Amman in 1988 where Jordan took fourth place.

Al Wihdat are this year looking for their 5th consecutive Premier League title. They won the season opening fourth Cup Winners' Cup.

Al Faisali won the second of the season's four soccer championships when they won their record 10th Jordan Cup.

Al Faisali's last major titles were the 1995 Jordan Cup and the 1997 Federation Shield, as Al Wihdat have won the Cup and Cup Winners Cup in the last two years and the Premier League in the last four.

The first leg of the Premier League will end Oct. 9. The second leg is scheduled to start Oct. 12 and end Nov. 20.

Kingdom's premier soccer competition resumes today

STANDINGS							
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Faisali	7	6	-	1	20	4	18
Wihdat	7	6	-	1	17	5	18
Hussein	7	4	-	3	7	6	12
Ramtha	7	2	3	2	9	10	9
Jazireh	7	2	3	2	7	8	9
S. Al Hussein	7	1	4	2	7	12	7
Qadissieh	7	1	3	3	6	10	6
Arabi	7	1	3	3	8	13	6
Kufroum	7	-	5	2	4	13	5
Ahli	7	-	3	4	3	7	3

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Russians offered bonus to beat France

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian national team players have been offered a bonus of \$5,000 per man if they beat World Cup holders France later this month.

Alexander Tukmanov, the deputy president of the Russian Football Union (RFU), told a news-conference on Saturday that the players will be awarded the bonus if they beat France in a qualifying match for the 2000 European Championships in Moscow next Saturday.

Russian squad players will earn a similar bonus if they beat Ukraine and Iceland, while victory over Armenia will be worth \$3,000 and a win over Andorra \$2,000.

Tukmanov said the bonus payments were being offered despite the RFU experiencing a cash shortage because of the Russian economic crisis.

He said the government provided the sport with no support but that the Federation had signed sponsorship deals with companies including Coca-Cola, Volkswagen and Nike from next year that should bring in \$1.8 million in income.

France's Djorkaeff likes it tough

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan's French star Youri Djorkaeff claims he is at his best when nothing is going right for him.

Djorkaeff scored an injury-time winner against Sturm Graz in the European Champions League here on Wednesday night, earning his team three priceless points in Group C after their defeat to Real Madrid.

It was a reward not just for 90 minutes' effort, but for weeks of training and trying to secure a first-team place after the World Cup finals.

The "Frenchman's" future had looked in doubt over the summer with the arrival of Roberto Baggio, the offers made by Spanish clubs and the challenge of making up for his mediocre season in 1997-98.

But Djorkaeff rose to the occasion and then revealed he is happiest with his back to the wall, because only then can his true character come out.

"When times are hard, I'm not the sort who says 'Oh, it's all a bit difficult, I'm leaving,'" he said. "On the contrary, it makes me even more motivated, because that's when you have to really show your character."

"I hit the post against Empoli, it didn't bother me. I hit the post against Sturm Graz, it didn't bother me. I just told myself to keep going, to keep trying. That's my character. And in the end, I did score."

He went on: "The goal was my reward for all the work I've put into training since coming back from the World Cup finals and the proof that I never give up. I've always wanted to do well for the team."

Despite the lucrative offers from abroad, Djorkaeff has now pledged himself to a future in blue and black, and to the San Siro faithful.

"I've never been frightened of playing on this pitch or of the reaction of the fans," he insisted. "Even last year, when things were difficult, they were still chanting my name."

"When I came back from the World Cup, I decided to stay. I had a look around, but then I said to myself 'this is where I feel good, where there is a lot to be won and where I have a lot to contribute. Why leave?'"

Wednesday's night goal was a shot in the arm for the Frenchman, but also for his coach Gigi Simoni, who was savaged by the Italian press and even mauled by club president Massimo Moratti after their defeat to Real.

"It's an important goal for me, but an even more important one for Inter," he said.

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Tyson psychiatric reports delayed

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Nevada boxing authorities will have to wait a little longer to see what a team of psychiatrists has to say about the state of Mike Tyson's mind.

Tyson may have to wait even longer to try and get his boxing license if his attorneys go ahead with plans to appeal to the Nevada Supreme Court in an effort to keep the public from seeing Tyson's psychiatric reports.

Attorneys for Tyson did not comment, but a source close to the Nevada Athletic Commission said Tyson's mission offices as of closing time Friday, four days after they were due.

Tyson attorney Jim Jimmerson said earlier he expected to have the documents sent to the commission by Monday at the latest.

Reports from a five-day evaluation of the former heavyweight champion still hadn't been sent to the commission.

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A CASE FOR PROTECTION

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH	EAST
AK943	A87
QK952	Q8
A83	Q1095
A103	AJ9842

WEST: Q1063, QAK74, QK76, SOUTH: AAK1062, QAK74, Q73, Q8

The bidding: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1a Pass 3a Pass
4a Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of 0

A good declarer is by nature a pessimist. The sound technician hopes for the best but prepares for the worst. South's play at four spades on this deal from the 1993 World Championship is an object lesson.

North's jump to three spades was a limit raise and South's hand was a borderline acceptance, especially at this vulnerability. However, four spades was the contract at every table.

West led the king of diamonds and East encouraged vigorously with the jack as declarer ducked. The diamond continuation was taken with the ace, a diamond was ruffed and trumps were drawn in two rounds, filling the queen.

Where Kerri Sanborn of New York was declarer, the ace of hearts was cashed next and declarer ended with a club. The only defense that offered a hope was for East to win the first club trick and return a club to West's king, but West was trapped in an endplay. The jack of hearts was won in the closed hand as East discarded a club (a low heart would have been run to South's seven), and the marked finessse of the nine of hearts permitted declarer to bring in the suit without loss. (A minor suit return would have allowed declarer to ruff in one hand while discarding a heart from the other.)

Well as declarer played, the defense could have prevailed. If, at trick two, West shifted to a club, the defenders can complete their book and exit safely with a diamond. West must then come to a heart trick for down one.

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Taleban seek U.N. intervention, warns of 'devastating' war

KABUL (AP) — Warning of a "devastating" war with neighbouring Iran, the Taleban religious army on Saturday wrote the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan seeking his intervention.

"The foreign ministry... requests your excellency once again to use your influence and authority for the amicable solution of the differences [with Iran]," the letter said.

Without this solution, the letter warned "the entire region will become engulfed by a devastating war." The Taleban army's foreign ministry said the letter follows the incursion of Iranian fighter jets and helicopters into Afghan airspace on Friday. Iran on Saturday denied the charges.

"The spokesman for the Zulfakar-2 manoeuvres, Brigadier-General Hassan Barati, termed as a mere lie Taleban's claim that Iranian jet fighters had violated Afghanistan's airspace," the official Iranian News Agency IRNA said.

IRNA quoted Barati as saying Iranian military flights were operated "with respect to their special corridor and taking into consideration corridors used by civilian flights in the region."

"Barati added that the flight zone along the border is 19 kilometres which has so far been observed by Iran," IRNA reported.

Iran has amassed 270,000 soldiers on its western border with Afghanistan and has been conducting massive military manoeuvres in the region, rolling hundreds of tanks toward the border with Afghanistan and bombing mock targets nearby.

The massive deployment of Iranian soldiers was Tehran's response to the killing in August of eight Iranian diplomats and an Iranian journalist in Afghanistan's northern Mazar-e-Sharif.

The Iranians were killed by invading Taleban soldiers.

While Iran is demanding an apology from the Taleban army, the Taleban is refusing, calling the slain diplomats "conspirators." The Taleban has accused Iran of supporting its northern-based opponents with money and weapons. The opposition, a collection of small groups representing the country's minority ethnic and religious groups, also includes among them Afghanistan's minority Shiite Muslims.

Most Iranians also are Shiite Muslims, while most Afghans are Sunni Muslims like the Taleban army, which also is dominated by the majority ethnic Pashtun tribe.

Meanwhile the Taleban's opponents and Iran accuse Pakistan of supporting the Taleban.

Late last week just as Iran prepared to begin its military manoeuvres on the border with Afghanistan, it sent home its non-essential personnel and several family members from Pakistan.

In Pakistan, the Foreign Ministry spokesman Tariq Altaf told reporters that Tehran cited "security concerns" for the withdrawal.

"We have been told... that they have sent home some families and some non-essential staff," Altaf said in Islamabad. "It has been mentioned that their security concerns have prompted this temporary measure." He refused to elaborate.

"We would like to show our understanding and respect for their decision, but our own embassy in Tehran and our school there is functioning normally," he said.

Pakistan routinely denies aiding the Taleban.



Iranian soldiers take cover as they exercise during war games involving some 200,000 troops in an Iranian border province next to Afghanistan on Friday (Reuters photo)

However, the United Nations has repeatedly said that aid to all sides in Afghanistan's protracted and bitter conflict is the key reason for its continuation.

In an attempt to soothe

temper in the region, the U.N. is sending its special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi. The envoy begins his peace mission to the region in Tehran and then to Pakistan.

It's not immediately

clear whether Brahimi also will visit Afghanistan, but Pakistan believes it is a must.

"We believe his mission will remain incomplete if he doesn't visit Afghanistan," said Altaf.

Pakistan also is urging both Iran and Afghanistan to show restraint warning that an outbreak of violence "would result in serious and perhaps unforeseen difficulties in the region."

Baghdad cleric to visit Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Abdul Razzaq Al Saadi, president of the Iraqi Islamic People's Congress, will make an official visit to Tehran, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Saturday. Saadi, who often acts as imam for Friday prayers in Baghdad, will lead a delegation of Islamic clerics and university professors, it said. He will be making his visit at the invitation of the Organisation of Culture and Islamic Communication, a governmental entity that oversees Iranian relations with non-Islamic religions.

'U.S. should drop opposition to pipeline'

DUBAI (AFP) — Washington must drop its opposition to Caspian oil being exported through Iran if it wants to normalise ties with Tehran, Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said in comments published Saturday. "I see no justification for their pressure on several countries to stop them allowing the energy resources of the Caspian Sea to be exported through Iran, which is a more secure and less costly route," he told the London-based daily Al Hayat. "If they are interested in normalisation with Iran, they must take certain steps, including ending pressure on the countries which border the Caspian," he told the paper in an interview conducted in New York.

Yemen executes man for murder

SANAA (AP) — A man convicted of murder was executed in a public square in the capital Sanaa, the Al Thawra government newspaper reported Saturday. It said Mohammad Ahmad Awad was shot dead by a firing squad on Friday in front of a large crowd that included the victim's family. Awad was convicted of fatally shooting Mohsen Mohammad Bajasser in August 1997, the paper said. It gave no details of the crime.

14 couples to be married in cyberwedding

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Fourteen couples in Singapore will exchange wedding vows to be witnessed live by relatives and friends over the Internet, the Straits Times reported Saturday. The wedding to take place Monday is organised by Singapore's Registry of Marriages and the National Computer Board as part of a campaign to promote strong marriages, the report said. Each of the 14 ceremonies will be beamed on a one-stop website linked to Chinese Internet websites in Singapore and abroad. Well-wishers can also sign electronic guest books and send digital greeting cards to the couples, it said. "Since my relatives and friends cannot go into the room to witness the ceremony (at the registry), about 20 of them will be congregating at my home instead to watch it through the Net," 21-year-old Eileen Au told the paper. Au said she and her partner Lee Soon Hee, 28, a technician, signed up for the cyberwedding "for the fun of it."

Interns to be subject of television drama

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Plans are underway to make a television drama about interns in Washington, like the now-famed Monica Lewinsky. Daily Variety said Friday. The daily, which quoted a source close to the proposed drama, denied that the series was inspired by President Bill Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky. But, the source said, "We can't create a show in a vacuum." The interns on the show will work in the Senate, the Supreme Court, in a law firm and in journalism. "It explores what happens when somebody is making decisions for the first time in their lives, and the impact it has on them and the wider public," the source said. Lewinsky is the "perfect example of somebody who made a private decision that shaped the public world," the source said.

'Taxi drivers should not talk politics'

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — The word is out: Malaysia's taxi drivers are not to talk to foreigners about the one thing they discuss most these days — the country's political turmoil. Reminding airport taxi drivers they are Malaysia's "diplomats to tourists," Deputy Transport Minister Mohamed Ali Rustam told them not to discuss the firing, jailing and apparent beating of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad fired Anwar Sept. 2, and he was arrested Sept. 20 after holding nationwide rallies calling for reform and Mahathir's resignation. When Anwar appeared in court Tuesday and Wednesday, he had a black eye and bruises. The case has received international news coverage that the Tourism Board blamed Friday for a drastic drop in visitors at a time when Malaysia needs foreign currency.

Iran's FM says no change in position on Rushdie

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi insisted on Saturday that there had been no change in his country's stand on the British author Salman Rushdie, and that it was London that had decided to put the affair behind it and normalise ties.

"As far as Salman Rushdie is concerned, we did not adopt a new position. Our position was the same as our officials had repeatedly stated in the past," Kharazi told Tehran Radio on his return from a session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

"Indeed, it was the British who decided to boost relations to the level of ambassador. This was another testimony to Iran's might and rightful position on the international scene," he said.

In New York on Sept. 24, Kharazi pledged that the Iranian government would not track down Rushdie, who was sentenced to death in a fatwa, or religious decree, issued in 1989 by Iran's late supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for his book "The Satanic Verses," deemed blasphemous by many Muslims.

After talks with his British counterpart Robin Cook, Kharazi also said the government would distance itself from a \$2.5 billion bounty placed on Rushdie's head by an Islamist foundation here.

Kharazi's announcement immediately led to a decision by the two countries to exchange ambassadors, for the first time since 1989.

Egyptian president praises Arabs' 25-year-old oil weapon

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak opened a seminar here Saturday marking the 25th anniversary of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and heaped praise on the decision to transform oil into a weapon in the Arab armoury.

"Some leaders took the historic decision to make oil a weapon in the Arab armoury," Mubarak said in an inaugural speech.

Mubarak praised former Saudi King Faisal, who initiated the oil embargo against the West in 1973, when Middle Eastern oil-producing countries met at the height of the war to hike oil prices 100 per cent.

"We will always remember with respect his role and chivalrous spirit," Mubarak said. He also singled out for

praise Syrian President Hafez Assad and his predecessor as Egypt's leader, Anwar Sadat.

Meanwhile the Egyptian oil minister told the daily Al Ahram on Saturday that the October 1973 war allowed Arab oil-producing countries to increase their oil revenues from \$9 billion before the war to \$68 billion in 1975.

"Oil prices quadrupled in a few months from \$3 per barrel in July 1973 to \$12 per barrel in January 1974," the minister said.

"Oil export revenues for the 25 years before the 1973 October war were only \$50 billion," he added.

Mubarak praised his "brother" Assad for "his leading role," and being a partner and ally in peace and

war. "The roar of planes in Sinai mixed in perfect harmony with the rumbling of cannons from the heroes on the Golan Heights," the Egyptian president said.

He added that Egyptian foundations for the 1973 conflict had been laid out by his predecessor Jamal Abdul Nasser, even though he died three years before the war started.

He also praised Sadat, assassinated in 1981, who he called "a hero in peace and war, who offered his life to his homeland."

"He was gracious in life and courageous in death," Mubarak said.

Mubarak added that the October war had "shattered the myths and illusions" of the Jewish state in place

since its victory in the Israeli-Arab war in 1967.

The president, however, slammed the lack of enthusiasm shown by Egyptian intellectuals to glorify the October war.

"This glorious page in Egyptian history has not received the attention it merits from Egyptian intellectuals and artists," he said.

"They should have noted the decisive moments in their books, drawings, films and poems so they remain alive in the spirits of the generations of Egyptians and Arabs to come," Mubarak charged.

"We were expecting and still expect Egyptian and Arab artists to immortalise this important event in books, paintings and dramatic arts," he added.

WHO calls for eastern Mediterranean states to unite in fight against smoking

BEIRUT (R) — The World Health Organisation (WHO) appealed to eastern Mediterranean countries on Saturday to unite in the fight against smoking, saying 100,000 people had died of tobacco-related diseases in the early 1990s.

"It is estimated that the burden of disease attributable to tobacco use in the region amounted to more than 100,000 deaths and more than one million years of life lost in the early 1990s," Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO's director general, said at a meeting of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean.

"Thirty five per cent of the male population smoked in the region in 1990," she said.

"Tobacco is a killer. It should not be advertised, subsidised or glorified. Adolescents should not be allowed to mortgage their lives to the seductive advertisements of the industry," Brundtland called on governments, health officials, non-governmental organisations, the media and pharmaceutical companies to work together to cut the number of smokers in the region and to back WHO's Tobacco Free Project.

"We need to ensure that our policy is backed by people, money and institutions... We need to reach in and reach out to build partnerships with a purpose for combating this epidemic," she said.

When Brundtland took charge of WHO in January this year, she launched the Tobacco Free Project with the aim of galvanising global support for tobacco control.

Brundtland counted tobacco among other diseases, including polio, malaria and tuberculosis, as a threat in the region.

She said dramatic progress had been made in eradicating polio in difficult areas like Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, southern Sudan and northern Iraq. But she added much more remained to be done in the region with the eradication campaign running critically short of funding.

"It is estimated that \$600 million will be needed till the end of 2000. Donors have to go the extra mile with us and rid the world of polio and its tragic toll on death and disability," she said.

Brundtland said that malaria was eradicated in some countries in the region last year but said there had been a resurgence of the disease in other countries. She did not elaborate.

"All this luxury cannot replace my home," one guest, Ali, said. He is bedridden and has been waiting for a visit from his family for a week now.

"Ideally, we would like to provide these services and treatment at home and ensure the traditional cohesion between members of the family," Jumairi said.

He has suggested that educating schoolchildren about the elderly's problems and making them aware of their needs should become part of the curriculum.

The UAE president's wife, Sheikh Fatima, has suggested a prize be given out to the most unsparring children in a bid to encourage families to look after their ageing parents.

UAE prefers community centres to old people's homes

By Habib Trabelsi
Agence France Presse

DUBAI — Families in the wealthy Gulf emirates are increasingly turning out elderly relatives when they become weak, senile or incapacitated, with the result that the authorities have had to step in.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has responded to the new trend by creating community centres for the dispossessed elderly to go and live in five-star comfort.

Many families in the rich petromonarchies of the Gulf have turned away from keeping the old and frail at home as they once used to, despite the fact that many of them live in huge houses with hordes of domestic help.

Modern social pressures and needs have accelerated the process and left many elderly people with

nowhere to go but old people's homes and hospitals, even though they often suffer from little more than loneliness and a lack of affection.

Bahrain's newspapers have reported several cases of elderly people abandoned by their families in mosques, hospital waiting rooms or even on the highway.

"Old people's homes are the worst thing that Western society has given us. We have opted for community centres where old people come for the day and then return home at night," the director general of Dubai's health department, Ahmad Atig Al Jumairi, told AFP.

"The government does not encourage families to get rid of their old parents. We have imposed draconian conditions for their admission into these clubs," Jumairi said. The community centre in Dubai,

in the north of the UAE, resembles a five star hotel and is a "testament to the sacred respect for parents demanded by Islam," Jumairi said.

The centre, which is government-funded, is strictly reserved for Emiratis of both sexes, so long as they do not have contagious or mental diseases.

Guests who have a family must not stay for more than two months, although those without families are admitted for life.

The pensioner must also prove that his family cannot provide him with the necessary medical care. The centre, which has the latest medical equipment will then provide the treatment free of charge.

The centre has a team of about 70 doctors and nurses and provides a whole range of treatment from physiotherapy to hydrotherapy. Aesthetic and spiritual needs are

also taken care of with a hairdresser, a prayer room and a huge banquet hall.

"All this luxury cannot replace my home," one guest, Ali, said. He is bedridden and has been waiting for a visit from his family for a week now.

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The UAE president's wife, Sheikh Fatima, has suggested a prize be given out to the most unsparring children in a bid to encourage families to look after their ageing parents.

UFO believers have their chance now

WASHINGTON (R) — Want to spend your life searching for aliens? The University of Washington says it has a place for you. The university says it has received a five-year, \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to set up an astrobiology programme so people can major in the science of searching the universe for life. "The highly interdisciplinary programme will involve 11 UW degree programmes — oceanography, astronomy, aerodynamics and astronautics, genetics, chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, atmospheric sciences, geophysics, geological sciences and history," it said in a statement.

Schiffer leaves catwalk days forever

MILAN (R) — German supermodel Claudia Schiffer says she has left her catwalk days behind her forever. "I'm never going to model again, not even in Paris," she told reporters backstage on the first day of the Milan womenswear spring/summer shows on Friday. But Schiffer, 28, could not resist taking one last stroll down the catwalk, modelling a spangly, silver-grey, full-length, sleeveless dress and then taking a post-show bow at Italian designer Giorgio Armani's Marchese collection. Though she promised to appear at her friend Ferrar's show each year, she said she prefers now to concentrate on making advertisements.

Account of 'Love Rat' Hewitt's affair with Diana stolen

LONDON (AFP) — A detailed account by former army officer James Hewitt of his relationship with Diana, Princess of Wales, has been stolen from his car, it was reported Saturday. Chapters of a manuscript outlining Hewitt's relationship with the late princess plus two personal items linked to her are believed to have been stolen from Hewitt's green Jaguar XJS, the Daily Mail newspaper reported. About \$85,000 in cash, cheques totalling around £20,000 and credit cards are also believed to have been stolen from the trunk of his car in west London.

Guillotined king's lock of hair sold in French auction

LE FONTANIL (AFP) — A lock of hair that belonged to King Louis XVI, who was guillotined during the French Revolution, was sold at auction here Saturday for \$5,500. The hair, preserved under glass in a medallion inside an 18th century gilt wood frame bearing the king's coat of arms, was sold with two authentic certificates. The buyer was a French royalist living abroad who did not want to be identified by name. The frame contained, in addition to the lock of hair, a text describing how the king's hair had been cut on the guillotine platform 205 years ago.

Stallone's former security guard pleads guilty

MIAMI (AP) — A former security guard for Sylvester Stallone who shot and nearly killed another guard who tried to keep him from robbing the actor's waterfront mansion has been sentenced to 25 years under a plea bargain. Corey Wade was facing a possible life sentence when he pleaded guilty Thursday to trying to kill Abel Romero and stealing a \$5,000 sword from Stallone, who wasn't home during the attack. Wade apologised to Romero, Romero's family, Stallone and the security guard company for whom he worked.

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